

LEADING WOMEN TOWARD SANCTIFICATION
CONFORMING TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST

By

Rosalynn N. Adossi

H.N.D. Auchi Polytechnic, 1983
M. Sc., University of Phoenix, 2010

Mentors

Lori Reiber, D. Min.
Stephen Swisher, D. Min.

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ABSTRACT

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Faculty Mentors

Lori Reiber, D. Min.

Thomas B. Dozeman, Ph. D.

The focus of this qualitative research is the use of phenomenological approach to leading women and young married Nigerian women toward Sanctification, conforming to the image of Christ. The participants went through six weeks of learning about the concept of sanctification and how to receive it, which led to the women being more receptive and more aware of who they were in Christ. The result is walking in the spirit, better communication skills in their marriage relationships and engagement in communal fellowship. There is spiritual maturation. They have the mind of Christ and are living a more victorious Christian life.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGBADA	<i>Traditional Nigerian attire for men</i>
ETC	<i>etcetera</i>
GAN GAN	<i>Talking Drum</i>
HOTR	<i>House on the Rock</i>
IJN	<i>In Jesus name</i>
IRO & BUBA	<i>Traditional Nigerian attire for women</i>
GEORGES	<i>Traditional Nigerian attire for women</i>
NIV	<i>New International Version</i>
NRSV	<i>New Revised Standard Version</i>
RCCG	<i>Redeemed Christian Church of God</i>
RCCGNA	<i>Redeemed Christian Church of God North America</i>
WIM	<i>Women in Ministry</i>
WM	<i>Women's Ministry</i>

INTRODUCTION

Every believer is called out of darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Believers are called for a purpose and in order to fulfill that purpose, one has the responsibility not to stop at the gift of justification but to accept also the gift of sanctification, in order to be able to have the fullness of God and to grow to be Christ-like in character and behavior worthy of Him who has called the believer. This paper has focused on the Theoretical Foundations for a doctor of ministry, with a focus in being rooted and grounded: a model for total surrender (Christian Perfection) and greater conformity to the image of Christ. The writer was commissioned to take the women of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) House on the Rock (HOTR) parish, a local body of Christ to the next level spiritually. This is currently being done by monthly meetings where the word of God is preached and the women are built up in their faith. Through character building and formation, workshops and seminars, opportunities are made available for the participants to ask questions and interact with other women. The writer also looked closely at the theoretical aspect of the doctrine of sanctification as it affects the individual as well as the community of the body of Christ. The writer looked at walking in the Spirit and the influence that had in the life and relationships of the newly married women in the group. Also examined were the challenges that many believers as well as the participants face in their Christian walk. The Old Testament

foundation scripture for this research is found in the call of Jeremiah when God called him to deliver his word to the people of Judah in Jeremiah 1:1-10.

Jeremiah was reluctant to answer the call of God and he gave excuses as to why he was not qualified to be the one to carry the message to the people but God assured him in verse 8 “Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.” The Lord further equipped him for the work that he had for him to do by putting His words in Jeremiah’s mouth and in verse 10 giving him authority over nations and kingdoms, to pluck up, pull down, destroy, overthrow, to build and to plant. The book of Jeremiah begins with a public declaration of his authority to follow in the Mosaic lineage of prophets and mediators for Israel. The call narrative of Jeremiah like the leaders before him, Moses (Exodus 3) and Gideon in (Judges 6) is as a messenger of God to the people and their mediator before God. He is told in verse 5 that he was approved by God, set apart and commissioned before he was born. The tension that the dual role creates can be seen in Jeremiah’s and the other ancient leader’s objection and expression of inadequacy for the role and ultimately to their call and commission.

The literary structure of the call of Jeremiah is to invite Judah to act faithfully, repent and turn back to God to avert judgment, even if that faithfulness and repentance is against the interest and reality of the Jerusalem establishment, the Scribes and Pharisees. All through the book the person of Jeremiah was subject to God’s sovereign action as was the history of Jerusalem, Judah, and finally Babylon. God’s voice and message was echoed through Jeremiah. Just as in the days of Jeremiah the call to prophetic ministry in the present times is evaluated through the prism of “the inescapable tension in which the prophet functions in that the private nature of the revelation given necessitates and yet

makes problematic its public confirmation. The prophet experiences the word as definitive, coercive; the people evaluate its genuineness and present applicability freely, critically.”¹ In present times the prophets that have a divine word from God speak with boldness and do experience opposition if the word is that of judgment or a return to holiness and righteousness while the false prophets of today still go out and speak what the people want to hear, what makes them acceptable and not necessarily a word that God has put in their mouth.

In the New Testament text we see Christ proclaimed for who he is: the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, all powers or rulers, thrones, authority and dominion belongs to him. Now we have been reconciled by the blood of Christ unto God and as long as we remain in Christ we can have all that is in Christ, “for in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28a). In Colossians 1:15-23, we see Christ revealed in the hymns as he restores the universe back unto God through his sacrifice. There is provision in Jesus Christ for the believer’s developmental process to spiritual growth and maturation. After the call to salvation, the believer has authority over nations, rulers and powers spiritually just as Jeremiah was given in Verse 10. He or she must abide in the teaching of Christ along with the process to maturation which includes total surrender (sanctification) to the will of God, Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues, fellowship with other believers, hearing the word of God preached regularly, a life of prayer, mentoring and discipleship, unwavering faith in God, attending Sunday school and Bible studies in small groups where questions can be asked and being involved in congregational worship.

¹ Ellen Davis Lewin, "Arguing for Authority: A Rhetorical Study of Jeremiah," (1985).

Women in Redeemed Christian Church of God (context) are in the same category with other believers who after answering the call to salvation need to move to the next level of maturation in Christ in order to be rooted and grounded – totally surrendered to the will of God, so they can be all that God has called them to be. Provision has been made in the word of God for women who are struggling with identity (who they are in Christ), lacking in exhibiting the fruit of the spirit, struggling with works of the flesh and not showing genuine love for one another. In the Redeemed Christian Church of God there are women ordained pastors, ministers and workers in the church. New church planting is encouraged by the parent body of the church, as one of the mission of the church is to have a parish in every neighborhood. My concern is for my context to understand the meaning of sanctification and how to apply this to their daily life. The newly married women in the group to walk in holiness in their relationships that will result in healthy marriages. Lack of understanding of the word of God and the gift of sanctification will lead anyone to live a mediocre Christian life and not having the ability to stand during tests and trials that life brings on a daily basis. The role that my historical foundations paper plays is to teach and train the women about the meaning of sanctification, how to receive it, apply it to their lives and walk in the word of God and holiness daily; so they can be conformed to the image of Christ and live a more victorious Christian life.

The writer as the leader of the women's ministry in her local church holds monthly meetings with the group where the word of God is preached, it is an avenue to encourage the members to bring questions to which biblical solutions are proffered. It is also an opportunity for the women to fellowship with one another. Godly character is

formed and nurtured in the small group. The society does not encourage morals and many believers and newly married women in this context are faced with temptations and trials of their faith and beliefs on a daily basis. The believer has been called out of the world, even though we live in the world. Constant training and teaching is required for the church community to have an edge and walk worthy of their calling. Fellowshiping with God is key for the believer as our Lord and Savior showed us while on earth. He fellowshiped with the Father in prayer always. The believer can achieve this through individual communion or in small group settings. The project enlightened the writer's context in this doctoral work, with a focus for them to be rooted and grounded in the word of God, maturation and conformity to the image of Christ. Pre-text and post-text surveys were employed. The model utilized was a six weeks of teaching. The objective was to have the context rooted and grounded in the word of God by creating a model for total surrender (Christian Perfection) and greater conformity to the image of Christ. The method used was teaching, pre and post-test surveys, interviews and training.

Church growth, evangelization and individual member's maturation through leading Nigerian Christian women growing in sanctification is the specialization of this author. Newly married couples, individual and communal growth can be achieved by leading men and women towards sanctification by conforming to the image of Christ, thereby walking in holiness in every area of their lives. This model can be duplicated in a men's fellowship or the congregation of any local church.

The thesis contains two parts. Chapter One through Five explains the foundational research and fully discusses the whys, what and when information about the project. The Sixth chapter discusses the analysis of the project, my findings and

reflections. In Chapter one, I discussed the focus of ministry and the model of ministry and why it was presented in the project. In Chapter two, I discussed the Biblical foundation to support the ministry for this project. My Old and New Testament texts are exegete in my discussion. In Chapter three, I discussed the background and experience supporting the context in my Historical foundation for this project. Chapter four looks closely at the Theological foundation for this project, explaining the theology that informs the basis, needs and reason for this thesis. Chapter five is the Theoretical foundation for the project. It contrasts theories on sanctification and concepts. It also discussed why certain experts and sources were used in support of this thesis. Chapter six is the analysis of the project. It is a reflection as well as the result of the implementation of the project. It documents my experience with each participants in the field. The ministry focus is a life of holiness or a sanctified life.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The model of ministry is leading women toward sanctification, conforming to the image of Christ. It has been presented in this document to enable men and women or groups in a community of believers know how to avail themselves of the finished work of Christ and live a more victorious Christian life. Women in all congregations of different denominations have a need to be rooted and grounded in the word of God. Sanctification is the second work of grace which is a gift that has been given to all believers but many are unaware of what it is or how to receive it. This lack of knowledge leads to a struggle in spiritual walk with the Lord. Many Christians are sincere and want to live a holy life totally surrendered and dedicated to God but do not have information or someone who has experienced the grace (sanctification) to lead them. The Redeemed Christian Church of God – House on the Rock parish, located in Grand Prairie, Texas is a Pentecostal denomination with a large number of women in the congregation. The headquarters of the church is in Nigeria with branches all over the continents of Africa, Asia, Europe, United States and the Middle East. The researcher is the leader of the Good Women Ministry in the church and given the mandate to take the women to the next level spiritually. By close observation, she saw the need for the women to be trained and taught in the way of sanctification so they can have the mind of Christ, grow spiritually thereby conforming to the image of Christ. When women walk in holiness in the area of

their marriages and relationships, they will be taken to the next level spiritually; from babes in Christ to mature Christians. This transformational work not only affect their marriage for good but touches every area of their lives; how they relate to their children, their spouse, co-workers, and service in the house of God.

Research has shown that women wear many hats. They are mothers, wives, students, homemakers, business owners, professionals, pastors and ministers etc. They are faced with challenges of juggling and struggling to integrate all their goals leading to stress and frustration which does not leave room for spiritual growth. Psychologically women want to have a balance in their lives. They have a yearning to be stress free, have more time for the things of God and grow in their spiritual walk with God. The fact that they do not have a zeal for the things of God is in the way of their spiritual growth. God has not called us to busyness, but to fruitfulness.

The goal of this project was to lead Nigerian Christian women towards growing in Sanctification by conforming to the image of Christ. Women in this context were not receptive to the work of sanctification and the role it plays in discipleship and growing into the image of Christ because of cultural differences affecting their marriages and all the activities going on in their day to day life. There was need for more commitment and a higher engagement in their spiritual development. The hypothesis was learning about sanctification; which led women to become more aware of who they were in Christ, have the mind of Christ, be more receptive, engage in spiritual things and conform to the image of Christ. The methodology was qualitative approach to action research, through training, teaching, questionnaires, interviews, pre-tests and post-tests for data collection and assessments of participants.

The women of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, House on the Rock parish are the context of this project. I found a synergy at the intersection of my context, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) House on the Rock and my passion to preach, teach and mentor believers to maturation in the Lord Jesus Christ. My focus was on Nigerian Christian women growing in sanctification and how culture affects their marriage, their day to day lives and the practice of holiness in America. The RCCG is a local as well as a global Church with branches (parishes) all over the world. The Church concentrates on teaching the word of God, Bible studies and desires to have the congregation grow spiritually so they can make heaven and take someone with them. Looking through the congregation at RCCG the love of God is paramount and there is a hunger and thirst to know more of the word of God and how to mature and grow spiritually. Many have been a Christian for years but you could see that they needed to mature in the things of the spirit. Knowledge of sanctification is helping the young married women in the group walk in holiness in their relationships and helping them achieve wholeness in every area of their lives.

My desire was to preach and teach the word of God with passion and take the believers through a process of spiritual growth so that they can mature in Christ and in turn disciple others in order to fulfill the great commission which commands us to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”¹

¹ Matthew 28:19-20, New Revised Standard Version. The NRSV is used throughout unless otherwise indicated.

One of the Mission Statement of the Church is to teach, preach the word and establish a church in every corner so that no one will have an excuse they did not hear about the gospel preached. Believers are to live holy so they can make heaven and to take someone with them. The preaching and mentoring of my pastor helped me to be rooted and grounded in the doctrines of the bible. Schmitt asserts that “The greatest praise of preaching lies not in what people say about the sermon but in what God does through it. While faithful preachers are those who evaluate their sermons, faithful sermons are the ones in which God does what God desires to do through the office of preaching.”²

What was not happening in my context was that women were not walking in holiness in every area of their lives. The change I brought into my context was to preach the word of God with power because it is the word of God that brings deliverance, salvation, healing and transformation. Took people through the process of maturation and they are becoming more like Jesus thereby fulfilling the great commission. Taught believers to know who they were in Christ and their inheritance as children of God, have faith in God, and showed the promises of God in his word and declared that it is possible to live a holy life. Taught on how to walk in holiness in their marriage to overcome cultural challenges they face in the society in which they live and helped them to be rooted and grounded in the doctrine of the Bible and to walk in the Spirit. The ministry nuances that have evolved in me are that God is a good God. With God all things are possible. God can do all things but fail. Everyone needs to know the word of God for his/her self. Living a matured life in Christ helps you live a victorious life. The need for

²David R. Schmitt, "The tapestry of preaching." *Concordia Journal* 37, no. 2, (2011): 107-129, accessed March 13, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

urgency to accomplish this ministry is that the coming of our Lord and Savior is at hand, souls are dying every day without knowing Christ and unprepared for eternity. Many Christians are led astray because of wrong doctrines and are not enjoying the full benefits of who they were as Christians because of lack of knowledge.

The will and purpose of God is that all believers be saved, sanctified, filled with the Holy Ghost, matured and live a triumphant life while here on earth and Ephesians 4:11-15 says “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-15). Many people have different expectations in marriage. In the Nigerian culture many marriages last and majority of the homes have two parents in the family. That is not to say that there are no single families or polygamous households, but the majority of marriages adhere to the traditional for better or for worse. Many have been through one disappointment or the other during courtship or marriages that resulted in a separation or divorce. Communication and the ability to listen to one another is key in a marriage relationship. When either verbal or non-verbal information is not transferred from one spouse to the other, there is bound to be a problem. A relationship where adequate communication is lacking cannot survive. Culture has its effect on every marriage. For couples living in Nigeria, the influence of family members can be a

challenge for the new couples where family members are directly involved in their lives and can visit at any time with or without invitation. This influence can be a positive also, in the sense that family members and mother-in-laws are readily available to help with baby-sitting or getting someone to help the couple clean the house or do laundry.

Communal life is an advantage in the African culture where the family members are there to help support one another. The younger generation are taught to respect their elders early in life. Young people live at home until they are married, as opposed to the single or individualistic lifestyle that we find in the society in which we live here. Young men and women are asked to leave home and be on their own at the age of eighteen.

Sometimes the younger generation in this society want to be independent or sometimes are forced out to fend for themselves if they refuse to obey the instructions of their parents or guardians.

The society and culture can affect relationships, marriages and individuals positively or negatively. In our fast paced technologically advanced society in America, social networks can be a source of concern if care is not taken. Social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, texting old boyfriends on cell phone and sexting are challenges that young married people face in this environment. People are constantly bombarded with nudity on TV, Internet and Radio all day long. Newly married women that are walking in holiness will realize that sexting is not a characteristic of someone that is totally surrendered to God. Biblical vows of forsaking all others will be adhered to. What challenges do newly-weds encounter in America? Most of the time there is no large family network to begin with. The people close to them are co-workers, neighbors, and Church family members, therefore the issue of maids or help in cleaning, cooking,

taking care of additions to the family in the area of new born babies becomes a challenge. Couples can learn to work as a team and adhere to their roles as well as be flexible to help each other out taking into consideration the environment in which they live.

In RCCG, HOTR women face challenges in their marriages and relationships because of the points enumerated above. Many have adjusted and some are still struggling with societal issues. Many immigrants in the American society have language barriers. In this local body of Christ, language is not a barrier simply because the primary language spoken in this congregation of believers is the English language. Church services and announcements are conducted in English. However there are pockets of groups in the church. The existence of cliques in any congregation including this one ostracizes others, members putting on a façade and not being inclusive hinders new comers from integration and denies many of a sense of belonging. This leads to a revolving door syndrome (new members come in they do not feel like they belong and before long, they leave through the back door, to go look for another church where they fit in). Superiority complex might be an issue since the background in this community is hard work and achievement (Nigerians are known for being ambitious in education, business, etc.). Culture is on display in the area of worship with drums, guitars, tambourines, talking drums (gan-gan), the piano, organs, trumpets, saxophones and divers instruments, which encourages a lot of praise and worship during services. This could work well for the target audience (Nigerians) and give satisfaction to the soul, spirit and body; but could alienate strangers who are from other countries. It is common to see men and women on Sunday in traditional regalia, like Iro and Buba, Agbada, Georges attires etc. In a Nigerian church the issue of church growth and attracting non-Nigerians

would then be a challenge for the local church. The gospel is preached, hymns and contemporary songs by popular Christian artists are sung but every now and then the songs in the native language are introduced to the delight of the indigenous members. All this would not be much of an issue if believers were to consciously walk in the Spirit.

Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22 spoke about the fruit of the Spirit which every believer in Christ should desire to have and walk in on a daily basis. The believer has the responsibility to do away with the passions and desires of the flesh, focus on Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” It is interesting to note that love is the first fruit of the spirit and it encompasses all the others because when we have love for God and love for our neighbors we will have joy, be at peace with all men, patient with people and ourselves. We will be able to show kindness, goodness, be gentle and faithful and also be full of self-control. Most believers struggle with walking in all the nine fruit of the Spirit and I believe that this can only be achieved by total surrender to the will of God through sanctification and daily walking in the grace of God. The role of women as nurturers demand that they walk in the spirit to avoid stress.

The role of women in the society today has not always been as competitive when it comes to legal, educational, socio-economic, religious matters, etc. Rahul Pandita opines that women have been looked down upon by chauvinists as inferior to men traditionally. Women were expected to stay at home to cook, clean and take care of their children while the men went out to work, further their careers, break new grounds and fulfill their dreams. Women had no access to education and where they did, the custom or beliefs in some areas was that, it was not wise or profitable to send a woman to school

since she will end up as a wife or mother someday and all the money spent on her training will be a wasted effort. Today, however things have changed and women in the 21st century are faced with the challenge of balancing their life, family, career and school and not having enough time to focus on their spiritual life which supports the core of who they really are. According to Rahul Pandita:

Women had to even fight for the basic right of being able to vote. They were given this right in the year 1918 but there was still a disparity between men and women. While the voting age for men was 18 years, it was 21 for women. This kind of gender discrimination was rampant in those times. Women started working in factories in the 19th century but the working conditions of the women were deplorable. They had to work for long hours and were given a meager pay. The federal laws in the 1960s were in favor of women to a great extent. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 laid down guidelines that men and women should be paid equally, but women continued to face discrimination in the private sector like retail stores, banks, etc. With time, a lot of people fought for women's rights and today a lot of changes have taken place but still we cannot say that gender inequality does not exist.³

The gap between men and women achievements in the society is diminishing gradually and this leaves the challenge that the women are faced with today as addressed in this project. There is no time for spiritual growth. Due to the fact that women now have to go out to work, go to school, call the shots, there is that vacuum created in the spiritual realm that has to be filled by women making time for their Creator. Time to fellowship with other women, time for Bible study, congregational worship as well as have the time to enjoy BBQ with their families. Today women have the avenue to build up character through meetings, seminars, outreaches and workshops which enables accountability, spiritual growth and maturation in Christ. Believers need mentors who they can be accountable to, someone to look out for their well-being. Someone who has

³ “Role of Women in Society,” Buzzle articles, accessed May 14, 2014, <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/role-of-women-in-society.html>.

been through the road they are journeying on, who can guide and support them when they come to a crossroad, when they find a truth in the word of God or when they discover things that they need clarity on. Baucham (2011), says that moral character is part of what God works in his people in sanctification. “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:29). The enablement to live a life that is pleasing to God is given to us through sanctification, by the help of the Holy Spirit. God will never demand of us what He knows we cannot achieve. Baucham (2011), goes on to say that believers can be conformed to the image of Christ. Transformation he says, is not something reserved for super Christians! It is the essence of the Christian life for all.⁴ It’s what happens as God works in us “both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil 2:13). It is the divine plan of God that “we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (Ephesians 4:13-14).

The church (RCCG) mentors believers through what we call the School of Disciples. This is a one year school in Biblical doctrines and how to do practical ministry and also through the weekly Sunday school classes. Women play major roles in the church as the researcher mentioned earlier, women are ordained pastors, deaconesses, commissioned ministers and workers. Women have over the years made great strides in the society. Pandita states that:-

⁴ Voddie Baucham, Jr., "Equipping the generations: a three-pronged approach to discipleship." *Journal of Family Ministry* 2, no. 1, (2011): 74-79, accessed March 13, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

The immense contribution women made to science, and literature made even their staunchest critics change their opinions. Marie Curie discovered the elements Radium and Polonium and won a Nobel Prize for this accomplishment. Maria Mayer, the famous Herman physicist helped the world know about the structure of the atom and was awarded the Nobel Prize for her contribution to the separation of the isotopes of uranium. Dr. Sally K Ride became the first American woman to travel in space. Toni Morrison's observation of the American life through an African-American perspective made her a household name in US and she was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Out of the 41 Man Booker Prizes awarded so far, 15 have been won by women.⁵

Opportunities abound for women today to be all that they are destined to be, both in the secular world as well as in the church. Having achieved all the laudable achievements, it is possible that the personal relationship with God and spiritual growth that is essential to the woman is neglected in the life of the believer.

The impact my model had on my ministry is that the women of RCCG House on the Rock parish, are rooted and grounded in the word, they know who they are in Christ and sanctification, the word of God was preached with power through expository preaching and teaching. There was awareness of what the gift of sanctification was and the result was a gradual and some immediate change to desiring and yearning for more of the things of God. Teachings on having the mind of Christ and conforming to the image of Christ, walking in sanctification in all areas of life including their marriage relationship was given. This model can be replicated in a male fellowship and in fact the whole congregation of a church, it is not and should not be limited to women alone. Believers were encouraged to be fully involved in discipleship, bible study and fellowship with other believers, evangelism leading to Church growth, personal

⁵ "Role of Women in Society," Buzzle articles, accessed May 14, 2014, <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/role-of-women-in-society.html>.

relationship with God and knowing the word for themselves. Subsequent ministries will be impacted through seminars, retreats, radio and TV outreaches.

The goal of this project was also to examine the effectiveness of espousing the word of God and the teachings on sanctification to the women participants. Sanctification affects every area of a woman's life more so the wellbeing of newly married women. The researcher showed them through the word, how to receive sanctification as a second work of grace that our Savior Jesus Christ has already paid for by his shed blood on the cross. She related the need to walk in holiness in their marriages because the point of tension is that when the women remain babes in Christ and do not mature and walk in the Spirit, it affects the way they relate to their spouses, relationships and every area of their lives. The researcher taught from the word of God on how to have the mind of Christ and how to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Many of the newly married women who had not gone through the pre-marital counseling before marriage engaged in things that were unhealthy for their marriages; examples are sending text messages and calling old boyfriends to chat, which lead to other things, sexting and sending nude photos to old flames which caused newly married husbands not to want to come home to their cheating wives. These things ought not to be if they were spiritually matured. Changes were seen in the way they related to their children, spouses and general outlook on life. The participants testified to the revelation they had received through the six week period of training and teaching on how they now view things. The author proposed and believed that if these spiritual elements were exercised within a six week period, there would be an impartation and a spiritual growth in the participants. The women of RCCG – HOTR as the context of this project were

involved by helping to plan and implement the ministry model within the local context. The team had been picked because they were interested and benefited from the focus of this doctoral work which was to lead them towards sanctification and conforming to the image of Christ. They helped to judge the needs of the context. They participated in the measurement process. The context associates helped to sharpen the leadership skills of the author. The professional associates contributed to the program by providing information and advice by asking probing questions, utilized their wealth of experience by guiding the author and communicated their commitment to excellence. Professional associates also were good sources of valuable information and resources and they were consulted because of their expertise in research development and thorough knowledge of the focus of the doctoral project of the author.

Some preliminary examples of questions asked are as follows:-

1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?
2. Have you received the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues? Yes or No. If No, why not?
3. Have you received the gift of sanctification? Yes or No. If No, why not?
4. Do you hunger more for the things of God or things of the world
5. Are you resentful, keep malice and vengeful or forgiving when offended
6. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?
7. Do you attend the Women's Meetings regularly? If No, why not?
8. What would make you to be more committed and involved with the group?
9. Do you have a passion for souls/mentor young believers – Great commission

10. What expectations do you have of the Women's Ministry?
11. What is your life like?
12. What takes up your time?
13. What are your stressors?
14. How do you struggle with cultural differences?
15. Is there someone in Church you would like to emulate?
16. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?
17. Do you pray together with your spouse?

The research methodology employed to test the hypothesis and evaluate the results was qualitative research, using training, expository teaching, questionnaires and interviews. Measurement tools used also included pre-test and post-test surveys to evaluate the current state of mind, belief and the depth of understanding of the participants. The author prepared messages and teachings from the word of God relating to what sanctification is, how to receive the gift, and exercise it on a day to day basis, how to have the mind of Christ; who they are in Christ Jesus, how to mentor young believers; examined cultural challenges affecting young married women, walking in holiness and taught on how to be conformed to the image of Christ. There were weekly meetings with the context associates over a period of six weeks of lessons, teaching and preaching from January 2015. Periodic conference by telephone was held as well with the context associates. Similarly, face to face meetings was held with the professional associates, as well as communication via email and telephone. Peer associates were communicated with via email, telephone call and face to face interaction. Finally, data collected after the six weeks of training and teaching has been evaluated to ascertain the

effectiveness of the project on the individual participants and follow up work like final interviews, surveys and collation of papers has been done prior to submitting the final project to the doctoral committee.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter is the Biblical Foundations for a doctor of ministry with a focus on being grounded in the word and sanctification, leading to conforming to the image of Christ. The focus is from the call of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah and men of old called to serve God and to be a voice to their community. Also examined are the letters of Paul the Apostle to believers to grow up to the age of maturity in Christ, and be Disciples of Jesus Christ. We also looked at how that is applicable to us today.

The biblical texts of focus are Old Testament text in Jeremiah 1:1-10 and the New Testament text in Colossians 1:15-23.

Jeremiah 1:1-10:

The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of King Josiah son of Amon of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of King Zedekiah son of Josiah of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month. Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord." Then the Lord put out his hand and

touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."¹

Colossians 1:15-23:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him—provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel."²

These chapters give foundation to my doctoral work. The exegetical focus includes examining the form of Jeremiah's call and the call of other men used of God (Moses and Gideon). Also explored, were the central motifs and literary structure of his call; to evaluate how the call of Jeremiah functions in the larger book. Also explored, was how the text provides guidelines for evaluating the call to prophetic ministry in the present time. In the Colossians text also, focus was on the form of the text, comparing the text to Jeremiah and exploring the central motifs and literary structure of the text. Also examined were the literary context of the text and the present meaning. The book of

¹ Jeremiah 1:1-10.

² Colossians 1:15-23.

Jeremiah, is a long and tumultuous prophetic writing in the Bible. "It speaks of a nation under massive assault and a people whose lives are wracked with pain³.

Under the leadership of King Josiah (640-609), national independence began to flourish once again after years of servitude to Assyria. During the final years of his reign, Judah enjoyed a season of stability and geopolitical autonomy. Things were not to remain peaceful for long for as soon as King Josiah died the nation was taken over by Egypt who was routed by Babylonians and they conquered the city of Jerusalem in 597"⁴. God called Jeremiah in the midst of all this turmoil to take a message to his people. Jeremiah son of Hilkiah from the village of Anathoth is called by Yahweh (1:1). The call of Jeremiah follows a literary pattern (Exodus 3: call and commission of Moses; Judges 6:11-18: Gideon is called and commissioned).

According to Ronald Youngblood

The date of Jeremiah's call coincided with the "thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah" (1:2), which was 627 or 626 B.C.⁷ That, says where Jeremiah was, when "the word of the LORD came" to him (1:2,4; 25:3). He later wrote that the Lord "began speaking to (him) in the reign of Josiah" (36:2), and he dated an early divine oracle to him as occurring "during the reign of King Josiah" (3:6). The year 626 B.C. would indeed have initiated a time of crisis for Judah, for in that year Nabopolassar became the ruler of Babylonia. He soon began an ambitious and aggressive program of expansion that, under him and his son Nebuchadnezzar II, would lead not only to the devastation of Nineveh in 612, the obliteration of Assyria in 609, and the humbling of Egypt in 605, but also to the invasion and eventual destruction of Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, together with the razing of its temple and the death and/or exile of its people, primarily in 597 and 586 B.C. The latter year, the "eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah," also marked the formal end of Jeremiah's prophesying in Jerusalem (1:3), giving him a total ministry of about 40 years in that city.⁵

³ Louis Stulman. *Jeremiah: Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries* 2005. 1. Abingdon Press.

⁴ Ibid. 2.

⁵ Ronald F. Youngblood "The call of Jeremiah." *Criswell Theological Review* 5, (September 1, 1990): 99-108, accessed May 19, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

In Jeremiah's call according to Youngblood, four verbs are employed, all of which have "I" (referring to God) as their subject and the suffix "you" (referring to Jeremiah) as their object.⁶

1. **Creation.** In the text God says the powerful words, that he "formed" Jeremiah in the womb. The verb form is used to describe a craftsman, like a potter with clay as in Genesis 2:7 when "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." Psalms 139:13 talks about us believers being formed by God and he covered us in our mother's womb.
2. **Choice.** God affirms that he "knows" Jeremiah. This denotes a knowledge by experience (heart) rather than a head knowledge by mere acquaintance. Such knowledge carries with it elements of redemption (Gen. 18:19). God is saying that he trusts and has confidence in Jeremiah to fulfill that for which he has been called, just as God had confidence in Abraham that he will command his children and household to keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice, so he can bring to pass that which he has spoken concerning Jeremiah and Abraham. This knowing also speaks of intimacy, individuality and it is personal. God says I know that Jeremiah will give my message to the nations. As the son of Hilkiah, a priest, Jeremiah would have been brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, have knowledge of the Ten Commandments and worship of YHWH. Growing up he would have experienced the reign of the evil kings that ruled Judah, who worshipped idols

⁶ Ronald F. Youngblood "The call of Jeremiah." *Criswell Theological Review* 5, (September 1, 1990): 99-108, accessed May 19, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

and did wickedly as well as experienced the reign of kings that obeyed the commandments of God.

3. **Consecration.** In the text God says that he “set” Jeremiah “apart”. To be set apart is to be reserved, sanctified and also translated as “holy”, as in Jeremiah 2:3; and many times in the Bible, Israel is depicted as “holy to the LORD.” In the Old Testament the prophets will sanctify the people and have them wash their garments before they approach God’s presence (Exodus 19:14). In order to be fit for the Master’s use one must be set apart, consecrated, sanctified, or made holy by God and for God.
4. **Commission.** God appointed Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations. He was given the authority and not just the responsibility to go and speak the word of God to the nations. God gave him the assurance, “do not be afraid for I will be with you. I will put my word in your mouth.” He that gave the vision, made the provision. The same is true today, when God calls men and women to his service, he is the one that gives boldness, utterance, finances, ability, helpers, anointing and everything needed to fulfill the call.

The basic meaning of the passage is God calling Jeremiah as a prophet to deliver a message to Judah by putting his word in Jeremiah’s mouth and giving him authority to carry out the mission. The book of Jeremiah begins with a public declaration of his authority to follow in the Mosaic lineage of prophets and mediators for Israel. The call narrative of Jeremiah like the leaders before him, Moses (Exodus 3) and Gideon in (Judges 6) is as a messenger of God to the people and their mediator before God. He is told in verse 5 that he was approved by God, set apart and commissioned before he was

born. The tension that the dual role creates can be seen in Jeremiah's and the other ancient leader's objection and expression of inadequacy for the role and ultimately to their call and commission.

The form of Jeremiah's call is a presentation of the word he has received from God to an audience. The major element in his call is the word itself, which is the key to the prophetic mission: "the prenatal appointment (v. 5) is now actualized in the appointment of the prophetic word (v. 9). With one gesture God sends forth his hand to place the word (v. 9); with the next he will send forth the prophet to speak it (v. 7)."⁷ Jeremiah had problems with the false prophets who were more interested in speaking soothing words or words that would appease the people because they had not received the "word" which God himself had put in his mouth (v. 9).⁸

The canonical shape of the book according to Walter Brueggemann (1998) "thus makes clear that God watches over His sovereign word, first to pluck up and tear down, then to plant and build (Jer. 1:10)." The central motif was the sinful nature of the people that brought judgment from God, of plucking and tearing down. Secondly, the word of hope imposed upon the judgment of planting and building. At this point in the history of the people of Judah they needed a savior in the person of Jeremiah, used by God to bring deliverance to his people. God alone can bring the ending and new beginnings in the historical process of any nation or people. There is a penalty for sin and disobedience as seen in the plucking and tearing down of those who disobey God and the mercy, grace and compassion of God is demonstrated in the hope imposed upon the judgment of

⁷ Walter Brueggemann, *A commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming*, (1998). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503/Cambridge, U.K.

⁸ Ibid. 26.

planting and building, leading to the restoration of the people of God. The same is applicable today, God has not changed. There is judgment for disobedience and the mercy of God is still available.

The literary structure of the call of Jeremiah is to invite Judah to act faithfully, repent and turn back to God to avert judgment, even if that faithfulness and repentance is against the interest and reality of the Jerusalem establishment, the Scribes and Pharisees. All through the book the person of Jeremiah was subject to God's sovereign action as was the history of Jerusalem, Judah, and finally Babylon. God's voice and message was echoed through Jeremiah. Just as in the days of Jeremiah the call to prophetic ministry in the present times is evaluated through the prism of "the inescapable tension in which the prophet functions in that the private nature of the revelation given necessitates and yet makes problematic its public confirmation. The prophet experiences the word as definitive, coercive; the people evaluate its genuineness and present applicability freely, critically".⁹ In present times the prophets that have a divine word from God speak with boldness and do experience opposition if the word is that of judgment or a return to holiness and righteousness while the false prophets of today still go out and speak what the people want to hear, what makes them acceptable and not necessarily a word that God has put in their mouth.

Jeremiah is given divine authority to speak "God's own word, placed in Jeremiah's mouth. God stands not only with the prophet (v. 8) but behind the word to guarantee its performance."¹⁰ The second vision is related also to the prophet's mission outlined in v.

⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *A commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming*, (1998). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503/Cambridge, U.K.

¹⁰ Ibid. 25.

10, and for the first time identifies its object: it is Jeremiah's own people who are to be uprooted and replanted, the cities of Judah which will be overthrown, pulled down, and rebuilt".¹¹ The text provides guidelines for evaluating the call to prophetic ministry in the present time as we look at Jeremiah 1:5-10. The first is divine initiative (v. 5). Second is human resistance (v.6). Third is rebuke and reassurance (vv. 7-8). Forth is physical act of commissioning (v. 9a). Fifth is substance of commission (vv. 9b-10).¹²

Part of the assignment of Jeremiah was for the people to repent and live a godly way. "For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification" (Romans 6:19). The people of Israel are "known" or "chosen" by God (Hosea 13:5; Amos 3:2). And priests are customarily "set apart" or "consecrated" for sacred tasks and sacred places. Paul likewise defended his apostolic vocation by asserting that God had "set him apart" before he was born and called him through grace (Gal 1:15).¹³ If only the believer knew that before they came to Christ they presented themselves to lawlessness and walked in the flesh but that now that they are in Christ there has been an exchange. They are now set apart, consecrated, sanctified and chosen by God to live a holy life. We need to remind ourselves often who we are in Christ Jesus so that we do not live and behave like the old man that we used to be but to walk in the newness of life in Christ. The word "disciple" occurs at least 230 times in the

¹¹ Walter Brueggemann. A commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming (1998).

¹² Ibid. 24.

¹³ Louis Stulman, Jeremiah, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries, (Abingdon Press, 2005).

Gospels and 28 times in Acts.¹⁴ Literally, disciple means learner; the Greek word *mathetes* is the root of our word mathematics, which means "thought accompanied by endeavor."¹⁵

In the Old Testament and New Testament men and women of old have been called by God to serve him and to carry his message to a group of people or to the world. Jeremiah, Moses, Gideon are examples. Today many men and women are called to do likewise. Many have felt inadequate when called and several have given excuses why they should not be the ones to answer the call. God has been faithful to equip and make provisions for those He has called to follow him. The same thing is true today. Provisions have been made in the word of God for the journey to maturation and living a holy life before a holy God. The writer has endeavored to look into the theoretical foundation of sanctification and how believers can live a holy life. The writer's context like every believer in the community of the body of Christ struggle with the works of the flesh. In Galatians 5:22-23 one is encouraged to walk in the Spirit so one will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Love happens to be the number one fruit and the basis for being able to walk this walk. When a believer loves God, that believer will not want to walk in the flesh or sin against God. When a believer loves his neighbor, that believer will not want to offend his neighbor. Individuals have a responsibility to be a doer of the word that he hears, as well as the church community has the responsibility to teach the word of God, so members can be rooted and grounded in the word.

¹⁴ Gary C. Newton, *Growing Toward Spiritual Maturity* (Wheaton, IL: Evangelical Training Association, 1999).

¹⁵ Michael Wilkins, *Following the Master: The Biblical Theology of Discipleship*.

Many great men in the Bible had been called of God for his service and it is interesting to note that most of them were not qualified to answer the call but God equips those he calls and makes the provision. The strength they needed, the boldness and courage they needed God always provided. Comparing the similarities of the call of Moses, Jeremiah and Gideon there is a thread of not being the right person for the job, but it pleased God to call these vessels and use them in their own time to deliver their people from slavery, oppression and imminent destruction. The same is true for believers today; many that are called are unqualified to be used of God but when God calls us he gives us the grace (that wonderful overflowing love of God our Father, which sought us out when we were completely unworthy, and took hold of us, and abides with us to give us the strength we need)¹⁶ to be able to live the life of a Christian.

According to Brueggemann's commentary on Jeremiah "The literature of Jeremiah engages in anguished poetic reflection and didactic prose explanation about the cause of Israel's end and the destiny of those deported to Babylon. Its reading is not shaped by power politics but by the categories of Israel's covenantal traditions of faith, which concern the holy purpose and power of Yahweh and the aches and hopes of the faithful community."¹⁷ There was a need for restoration and deliverance and God sought out a vessel and that vessel happened to be Jeremiah through his call just as many like Moses and Gideon were called.

Jeremiah is called to the people of Judah, Moses is called to play a leading role in the liberation struggle of his people in the land of Egypt. God not only chooses to be the

¹⁶ Stephen Neill, *Paul to the Colossians*, (1964), 23-24. NY Association press, 3147981.

¹⁷ Walter Brueggemann, *A commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming*, (1998).

liberator of those oppressed but to do it through women and men who take that struggle upon themselves. Through his call, Moses is marked as God's emissary. God's emissary is the one who is called to utter a conscientizing and liberating word.¹⁸ The word might be burdensome and unwelcome but it is a word that brings deliverance and repentance. It could be a word that brings judgment on Pharaoh and his people as it is spoken through Moses. It is a word that brings deliverance to the people of God as they are commanded to move forward and the Red Sea is divided before them to cross over on dry land. Moses hears from God and transmits that which he has heard to Pharaoh to release the chosen people of God so they can go worship Yahweh. In like manner, through history and in present day, the prophets are called to be emissaries, and in John's Gospel, Jesus is spoken of in the same terms.

Despite the miracle of the burning bush that was not consumed, Moses like Jeremiah gives excuses why he should not be the one for the task of delivering his people from Egypt. He gave the excuses of being a fugitive who ran away from Egypt because he killed an Egyptian and for being a stammerer, who is not qualified to lead the people of Israel. Moses finds that God who gives the call makes the provision and enables those He has called to fulfill their assignment.

Jeremiah and Moses were called and given specific assignments by God. Gideon is called to deliver his people from the hands of the Medianites. Gideon's is a story of vocation —of God's call to a human being. In this case it is a call to assume leadership and power in order that God, through him, may save Israel. As always, the call comes in

¹⁸ Richard Shaull, "From the pulpit: the call of Moses." *Church & Society*, (1985).

an individual way to one unique human being.¹⁹ Gideon's call was to deliver his people from the oppression and abuse of the Medianites. Just like leaders before him (Moses, Jeremiah) who resisted the call of God on their lives, we see Gideon trying to excuse himself from carrying out the call and assignment of God. This theme begins faintly with God's first call and Gideon's protest that he is too lowly a man to lead the armies. It wavers with Gideon's early hesitations, and changes from a minor key to a major outcry with certainty through his victories and ends on a satisfying note with the dream which influences him to fear no longer.

In Judges Chapter five, Gideon is visited by an angel standing "near the oak tree of Ephra". The angel greets him with a compliment: "The Lord is with thee, courageous heart." Gideon has chosen this spot in order to avoid trouble. He has come out "to the wine press," the Bible says, "so as to thresh his wheat there unobserved." It is a sensible precaution, but not one to inspire the epithet, "courageous heart."²⁰ This task of threshing his grain befits Gideon the husbandman. In human logic, Gideon asks the angel: "If the Lord is with us, how it is that such ill fortune has overtaken us? . . . The Lord has forsaken us now, and lets the Medianites have their will with us." But the angel has his own logic. He tells Gideon to go himself and liberate the people: "Thou hast strength; go and set Israel free. . . . Thou shalt smite Median down as though but one man stood in thy path." The Spirit of the Lord wrapped Gideon round. He is prepared for his saving work, which will be done by God's power.²¹ The purpose of Gideon's call as is the same with

¹⁹ M Laurentia Digges., "Gideon's trumpet call." *Worship* 35, no. 10, (1961): 644-652, accessed May 13, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²⁰ Ibid. 646.

²¹ Ibid. 646.

the call of prophets in our present time is to deliver the people from oppression, avert judgment and bring restoration because of God's mercy and compassion. Jeremiah had a similar response to his call when he said in Chapter 1 "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." (NRSV) to which the Lord God reassured him that he would be with him. According to Wilhelm Vischer "in the assembly of the village or town, it is the "elders" who do the speaking, and the married men, and the fathers of the household, while a "boy" keeps silent. But Jeremiah's ministry of the word is no more bound by social rules than it is a matter of intelligence and experience."²² The Lord attests his promise with a sign: "Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, 'Behold, I have put my words in your mouth' "²³ as he did with Moses at the burning bush that was not consumed and Gideon the sign of the dew on the ground. According to Vischer "He has "formed" Jeremiah, he has given him the most tender and faithful heart, so that in his delights as in his great sufferings, he would be the living and dying witness of the heart of God, so that his Son might be revealed in him."²⁴ God knew Jeremiah before he was formed in his mother's womb as a potter would mold a piece of clay into whatever shape he desires. The text goes on to say that God sanctified and consecrated him, set him apart for a special purpose that he would carry out on earth. He was being sent not only to Israel-Judah but to the nations who did not know God. So also when we are called and set apart God has a purpose and a plan for our lives. Colossians Chapter 1 says we were once estranged from God but have now

²² Wilhelm Vischer, "Vocation of the prophet to the nations: an exegesis of Jeremiah 1:4-10." *Interpretation* 9, no. 3 (July 1, 1955): 310-317, accessed April 16, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²³ Ibid. 312.

²⁴ Ibid. 317.

been reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present us holy (sanctified, consecrated), blameless and irreproachable before him, provided we continue in the word of God and in the faith.

Vischer asserts that the whole ministry of Jeremiah shows how in the crises of the chosen people of God, God prepared the vocation of the Gentiles. In executing justice on Israel-Judah, God executes it on the nations and forgiveness is granted to the pagans through the mercy of God through his son Jesus Christ. Where the sin of the elect abounds, the mercy of the Lord super abounds on the nations.²⁵ Despite the unfaithfulness of his chosen people, despite the pain, unbelief and suffering that the people of God caused, God loves them with an everlasting love and that love compels him to restore them. But their sin and unfaithfulness opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles to be grafted into the kingdom of God. We, believers of today are the beneficiaries of the mercy and grace of God because of the disobedience of his chosen people.

While the book of Jeremiah explains the call, the struggles and disobedience, the law, judgment, exile and promised restoration for the people of Israel, the Book of Colossians addresses every area of Christian life. Paul covers the individual life, the home, family, work and our treatment of one another. The theme of the book of Colossians as we take a closer look, opens to us the sufficiency of Jesus Christ, to not only meet our needs but each individual maturing to the image of Christ. As we look closely at Colossians, we find it is a book that talks about Christian endurance, who end up seeking the end of a thing from the beginning. When one can see the end of a thing

²⁵ Wilhelm Vischer, "Vocation of the prophet to the nations: an exegesis of Jeremiah 1:4-10." *Interpretation* 9, no. 3 (July 1, 1955): 310-317, accessed April 16, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

from the beginning, you can endure. The book seeks to build colossal Christians who do colossal damage to the kingdom of darkness. The book encourages believers to move from the experience of salvation to sanctification and dig deeper into the spiritual things of God that will make them to be rooted and grounded in the word of God. It encourages them to have the mind of Christ and to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

Colossae was one of the smaller cities in the valley of the river Lycus in the Roman province of Asia. It was a busy, prosperous and thickly populated part of the world²⁶. Colossians was written by Paul from Rome about 64 A.D. and sent with Ephesians and Philemon by Tychitus. The theme is freedom from the law, all outward forms of religion, rituals, human philosophies, and false mysticism; and complete and real union with Christ in life and conduct. Practical holiness is shown to spring from truth and faith in God. Paul says, one cannot grow into Christ, but he may grow in knowledge, experience, and fullness of grace benefits by virtue of being in Christ and walking in the light (1:23).²⁷

Many writers argue the authenticity of Paul writing the book of Colossians. Many believe Timothy wrote it and the argument is scholars view this explanation of the letter's authorship best accounts for the unique terminology and patterns of expression that distinguish it from Paul's other epistles.²⁸ It is believed that Timothy probably wrote it for Paul, perhaps because, being in prison, Paul may have been unable to write it himself. However, the content and structure of the epistle are Pauline, or at least as Pauline as

²⁶ Stephen Neill, Paul to the Colossians, (1964): 9. NY Association Press, 3147981.

²⁷ Finis Jennings, Dake: Annotated Reference Bible (Lawrenceville, GA 1991): 222.

²⁸ Stephen Neil, Paul to the Colossians, (1964): 9. NY Association Press, 3147981.

Timothy understood Paul. Colossians may have come from Timothy's pen during Paul's assumed Ephesian imprisonment or during his first Roman imprisonment.²⁹ Paul added his own personal greeting at the end. Paul and Timothy's viewpoints are seen as almost identical. The source of the Colossian false teaching is essentially Jewish, having arisen from one or more synagogues in Colossae. The Colossian errors were essentially perversions of the Christology of the gospel.³⁰

Colossians 1:15-20 is referred to as the "Christology digression" by some theologians. According to Otto Piper "the designation "Christological excursus," or "digression," is utterly misleading and prejudices a sound interpretation from the very outset. The expression he went on to say, intimates that the passage does not necessarily belong to the context, that in verse 21 Paul would take up the thread of thought he had dropped at the end of verse 14 (or some would say, verse 13), and that Paul was giving a purely theoretical instruction, or speculations on the problem of Christology. Yet, from beginning to end, the whole letter discloses one governing idea—to show to the recipients how infinitely superior their faith is in comparison with the ersatz religion that certain people had tried to offer them as an improvement of their faith".³¹ Paul makes it clear in the book of Colossians that all a believer needs to grow and be grounded in the word is to follow Christ, acknowledge and received the finished work of Christ on the cross. The words taught by Jesus if assimilated and practiced by believers will make them to be

²⁹ Stephen Neil, *Paul to the Colossians*, (1964): 10. NY Association Press, 3147981.

³⁰ Thomas L. Constable, "The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: a commentary on the Greek text," (1997).

³¹ Otto Alfred Piper, "Savior's eternal work: an exegesis of Colossians 1:9-29." *Interpretation* 3, no. 3 (July 1, 1949): 286-298, accessed May 21, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

rooted and grounded, not subject to being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine prevalent in those days and even now to lure the believer away from the gospel.

Piper suggests that “what seems to be a "digression" in Col. 1:15-20 is a phenomenon found frequently in the Pauline letters. At certain moments, when the Apostle is speaking of one of the outstanding deeds of God or Christ, he feels compelled to remind his readers of the greatness and the marvelous nature of the works of God.”³² In the text Paul draws in the believer to the experience he has of Christ as the center point of creation, in whom all things consist. He wants the believer to know that it is and has always been about Christ, in the beginning of creation, now in their walk and in the future in eternity. In him we live, we move, we have our being. After all Christ is the one that died so that we may be reconciled back unto God. In the beginning he was with God and in eternity he will reign and we will reign with him. It is all about Christ Jesus.

Colossians is a creation hymn about the universal significance of the Christ. The text (Colossians 1:15-23) reveals the glory of Christ, the Son of God who makes the invisible God visible. All things were created by Him, and all exist within the sphere of His authority. Visible things of this lower world and invisible and spiritual beings of the higher realm like thrones, lordships, powers and authorities. Christ is the means by which all these things exist and He is the central point in relation to which their meaning can be understood.³³ Colossians 1:13-20 is the extension to Christ (by Paul) of a cosmic redeemer motif with roots in the days of atonement ritual. Subsequent studies have

³² Otto Alfred Piper, "Savior's eternal work: an exegesis of Colossians 1:9-29." *Interpretation* 3, no. 3 (July 1, 1949): 286-298, accessed May 21, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

³³ Stephen Neill, *Paul to the Colossians*, (1964): 30. NY Association Press, 3147981.

continued to divide over the issue of Jewish or extra-Jewish background, but a consensus of opinion clearly designates Col 1:15-20 a hymn or a hymn-like composition.³⁴

A close scrutiny of the hymn imbedded in Colossians 1:15-20 shows that it is neither an idea peculiar to “Jewish” nor “Gnostics” but recognizing through recent studies and discoveries by scholars, a strong syncretic character of a world into which Christianity was born.³⁵ Colossians 1:15-20 is a literary and thought form that has developed out of the Christian experience.³⁶ The form expounds a theology of an exalted Savior which evinces interest in the person of Christ only as respects his death, resurrection, and universal lordship.³⁷ Its ultimate achievement is a cosmic Christology which associates the Savior as Son of God preexistent with the creator of the universe, his function as universal mediator, his descent to earth where he has effected redemption, and his return to heaven where he is exalted as cosmic ruler.³⁸

In its ancient context the full meaning of the Colossians text can be seen in false prophets emphasizing the old Jewish customs and background, observations of feasts, new moons and holy days. These were rules that were prevalent in the old Jewish law of “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle” (Col. 2:21). Different types of prohibitions and taboos were introduced by these false prophets who were more interested in taking the people back to the Jewish background rather than exploring the new life and freedom that Paul preached. The false teachers claimed they would complete and perfect the

³⁴ Stephen Neil, *Paul to the Colossians*, (1964): 13. NY Association Press, 3147981.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 12.

³⁶ Bruce Francis Vawter, “Colossians hymn and the principle of redaction,” (1971).

³⁷ *Ibid.* 10.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 10.

simple faith to which the Colossians had been introduced by Paul.³⁹ They were more interested in seeking for guidance from the stars for their destiny. These teachers were not willing to accept Jesus Christ as the sole and only source of man's salvation, the unique Son of God, with whom no one else and nothing else in heaven or earth can be compared. We find the same false teachers in our midst today. The Epistle is a friendly one. It is not written in the angry tone of Galatians. Paul writes in Colossians to warn the Christians that if they pay careful attention to what he has taught them they will be established in the faith and the danger of false teachers will pass away.⁴⁰

The exposition of the Epistle is worthy to note revolves around three main points. (1) Christ, (2) The Church and (3) The new man in Christ. The whole Epistle is an affirmation of the centrality of Christ. Paul found Him to be the Savior of mankind. He also sees the cross and Jesus resurrection as the process in which God is planning to reconcile the universe to Himself (Col. 1:20). This is similar to the call of Jeremiah, Moses, and Gideon to save the people. Secondly, Paul develops the concept that the Church is the body of Christ. (Col. 1:18, 24). The concept speaks of unity of the body and the unity of God's purpose for mankind. Thirdly, Paul makes clear that the new man in Christ involves a complete change in relationship to God, to oneself and neighbors.⁴¹

What then does the believer need to grow? Is it expository preaching? Is it fellowship with other believers? Is it attending Sunday services and Bible Study? Is it an effective prayer life? Is it mentoring and discipleship? Is it worship? Is it faith and

³⁹ Stephen Neill, Paul to the Colossians, (1964): 12. NY Association Press, 3147981.

⁴⁰ David M. Hay, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Colossians, (Nashville, TN. Abingdon Press, 2002).

⁴¹ Stephen Neill, Paul to the Colossians, (1964): 19. NY Association Press, 3147981.

belief in the word? Is it a consistent study of the word or being a doer of the word? It is all the above and more. The goal of this writer was to examine all these processes that lead to the maturation of the believer. The Preacher or Pastor is admonished to proclaim the gospel of Christ, give individuals the opportunity to come into the kingdom of God, teach with all wisdom the word of God, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. Feed the Congregation the Word of God that will make them grow and be complete in Christ Jesus. And the admonition of Paul in Colossians 2:6-7 is “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”⁴² It can be interpreted as Christ’s Lordship in relation to Christian belief and lifestyle, to continue in the faith they have received.⁴³

Faith in God and in the truth the believer has received will enable the believer to walk in the Spirit, exhibit the fruit of the Spirit and thereby fulfill the commandments of God. As it is clearly stated in the book of Galatians 5:16, 22-23 which goes on to say that believers are to “walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such things there is no law”(Galatians 5:16, 22-23) (NIV). Believers having received the gift of salvation are to continue to walk by the Spirit of God so that they will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Walking in the Spirit is one of the processes to maturation of the believer. According to Piper “Verses 17 and 18a are the bracket that holds together the Son's work in Creation and Redemption. Their unity is

⁴² David M. Hay, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Colossians, (Nashville, TN. Abingdon Press, 2002).

⁴³ Ibid. 28.

not an incidental sequence of actions but rather is rooted in that purpose of God which Paul in verse 9 mentions as the ultimate goal of knowledge which he requests God to grant to the Christians in Colossae.”⁴⁴ Piper opines that the plan of redemption is not an afterthought of God occasioned by the fall of man. Rather the Son was destined from eternity to be not only the ruler but also the rallying center of all creatures (vss. 16 and 20).⁴⁵

The chief focus of theological interest in Colossians is the hymn of the text (1:15-20), and the use which the author of the letter makes of it, for it contains ideas and claims for the status and work of Christ which are to some extent unparalleled in the New Testament.”⁴⁶ Claims of the supremacy of Christ as the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation and by him all things were created. This can be seen in Genesis where God said “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish...” (Genesis 1:26) For the believer to be matured faith and belief in the finished work of Jesus Christ on Calvary is essential in the Christian walk, which will lead to being rooted and grounded in the love that God has for the Church. Expository preaching, therefore, provides the vehicle for the gospel to be proclaimed. Schmitt asserts that “The greatest praise of preaching lies not in what people say about the sermon but in what God does through it. While faithful preachers are those who evaluate their sermons, faithful sermons are the ones in which God does what God desires to do

⁴⁴ Otto Alfred Piper, "Savior's eternal work: an exegesis of Colossians 1:9-29." *Interpretation* 3, no. 3 (July 1, 1949): 286-298. accessed April 17, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 286.

⁴⁶ Andrew Wedderburn, Lincoln A.J.M. *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters*.

through the office of preaching.”⁴⁷ People can only have faith in God and what God says he will do in his word when that sermon or message is delivered with power, passion and the whole gospel is rendered not watered down. If we are to see the believer in Churches grow and move to the next level in their spiritual journey the authority of the word of God has to be preached with boldness. Many want to live life the way they want to live and do not believe in absolutes. Holland (2011), opines that “In a culture that disdains authority, authority is exactly what is dispensed in the faithful exposition of the Word of God. Foundational to a commitment to expository preaching is a commitment to biblical authority.”⁴⁸ Men and women of God who preach and teach the Word have a duty to commit to teach the whole counsel of God, not adding to and not removing from the word to appease any group or individual.

Jeremiah declared the word that was given him by God for the establishment in Judah as well as to the people. I would say he passionately declared the word that was given to him to speak to the people of his time. The goal of the preacher should be to transform humanity by the expository preaching of the word of God. Transformation of heart and mind when the word is preached is what impacts the life of the believer and sets him or her on the path to maturation. Chappell succinctly put it this way “The ethic of expository preaching is plain: Because we believe that the power of spiritual transformation resides in the Word of God, the goal of the preacher is to say what God says.”⁴⁹ The prophets of old, Moses, Jeremiah and Gideon proclaimed the word that had

⁴⁷ David R. Schmitt, “The Tapestry of Preaching,” (2011).

⁴⁸ Richard L. Holland, “Expository Preaching: the logical response to a robust bibliology.”

⁴⁹ Bryan Chapell, “The future of expository preaching.” *Presbyterion* 30, no. 2, (2004): 65-80, accessed March 13, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

been put in their mouth by God. The word saves, sanctifies the hearer and delivers from bondages of fear. Mohler, explains the definition of preaching this way, saying “Preaching is not merely about the temporal concerns of the here and now. Preaching is about life, death, and matters of eternity. Preaching constitutes the means whereby God calls persons into His kingdom and shapes His people into conformity with the character of His Son. In sum, the preaching of God's Word saves and sanctifies, preparing believers for eternity.”⁵⁰

Jeremiah brought a word to the people of Judah that he had received from God. A word of judgment if there is no repentance, a word of reconciliation and restoration if there is obedience. Likewise, Paul spoke on the finished work of Christ and guidelines on how believers can have full benefit of the grace of God. How does this apply to us today? Many people want to understand the word of God, they want to understand whatever they read in the word and they need someone to explain and answer the numerous questions they have about life, what they are going through on a daily basis, what they have read in their quiet times – simply to be able to comprehend what God is saying in his word. Gilbreath (2002) writes "One of the things that are evident from the studies I've seen is that people really want the preacher to explain the Bible," says Haddon Robinson, professor of preaching at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary near Boston. "They simply want a preacher who can help them understand God's Word."⁵¹

⁵⁰ Albert R Mohler Jr., "As one with authority." *Master's Seminary Journal* 22, no. 1, (2011): 89-98, accessed March 13, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁵¹ Edward Gilbreath, "Farther in and deeper down: evangelicals of all stripes are reviving the neglected art of expository preaching." *Christianity Today* 46, no. 4, (2002): 52-56, accessed March 13, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

The ability to be able to ask questions like in small groups like house fellowship and men's groups or women's groups is very vital to the development of the believer.

One on one opportunity to share experiences or misconceptions and receive clear guidance is vital in the spiritual growth of the believer. In order to achieve this in the body of Christ, God made sure that "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-15). As members of the same household of faith believers are to build each other up, encourage one another and mentor new believers. "Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11). So, then, let us pursue the things of peace, the things which "build one another up" (*oikodomes*) (*Romans 14:19*). Lynes (2007) asserts that "The basic motif here is to assist persons to become faithful Disciples of Christ, both individually and communally, to help the Body of Christ to be the Body of Christ, as a body and in all of its parts. The Greek root carries with it the strong suggestion that this is our home, that this is the natural family (whole world) we are speaking of."⁵²

Part of the assignment of Jeremiah was for the people to repent and live a godly way. "For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to

⁵² John W. Lynes, "Maturing in Christ: a theological perspective for conference ministry." *Prism* 21, no. 1, (2007): 67-87, accessed March 13, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification” (Romans 6:19). The people of Israel are “known” or “chosen” by God (Hosea 13:5; Amos 3:2). And priests are customarily “set apart” or “consecrated” for sacred tasks and sacred places. Paul likewise defended his apostolic vocation by asserting that God had “set him apart” before he was born and called him through grace (Gal 1:15)⁵³. If only the believer knew that before they came to Christ they presented themselves to lawlessness and walked in the flesh but that now that they are in Christ there has been an exchange. They are now set apart, consecrated, sanctified and chosen by God to live a holy life. In Jeremiah the desire of God was to have the people of Israel turn to him, consecrate themselves and worship him, so he can fulfill his will in their lives. The same desire God has today for all of mankind to turn back to him so he can fulfill his desire in their lives. We need to remind ourselves often who we are in Christ Jesus so that we do not live and behave like the old man that we used to be but to walk in the newness of life in Christ. In Galatians 4:19, Paul writes: "My dear children for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is *formed in* you, how I wish I could be with you now."⁵⁴

Spiritual growth and maturation should be seen as a process of metamorphosis until we are formed in the image of Christ. “In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul answers emphatically, "We (that is, Paul and others who share his ministry) are being changed into his likeness." Paul's Christian life is a metamorphosis, a growing likeness to Jesus

⁵³ Louis Stulman, Jeremiah, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries, (Abingdon Press, 2005). Nashville, TN 37202-0801.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 41.

Christ. He, in taking up the cross, is an authentic disciple.”⁵⁵ We are to grow from a babe in Christ into maturity. The day we gave our lives to Christ we became a new creature old things were passed away and everything became new spiritually in our lives. Our spirit was regenerated, however our soul (mind) and body was not. We have a part to play through the process that the writer is enumerating in this paper to get to the place of spiritual maturation in Christ, body, soul and spirit. We are a tri-partite being, we are spirit, have a soul and live in a body. Man’s spirit is that part of him or her that knows God⁵⁶. In Paul’s epistle to the Church in Thessalonica we see a glimpse of man’s threefold nature.⁵⁷ “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23) Man’s spirit is the inward man while the body is the outward man, the physical, the house in which we live.⁵⁸ Paul wrote to the saints at Rome “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship” (Romans 12:1). God wants us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to him so it does matter what we do with our body. In order to walk the spiritual walk to maturation the believer has a responsibility to present the outward man pure and holy before his Maker.

Another area through which we grow in our spiritual walk is fellowship that creates room for mentoring and worship with other believers of like mind and same faith

⁵⁵ James Thompson, "Authentic discipleship: an introduction to 2 Corinthians," (1976).

⁵⁶ Kenneth Hagin. *The Threefold Nature of Man*, (Tulsa OK. RHEMA Bible Church. Broken Arrow, 2003).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 25.

with us. We are encouraged to mentor new believers, be there for them when they have questions or have difficulties in their new walk with Christ and not to forsake the assembly of other believers. Conscious effort has to be made to make oneself available for worship and fellowship with other brethren. Basil Mathews' definition of fellowship is: "An active comradeship between personalities, man or woman or both, who unite with one another in a common worship, or battle for a common quest, or play their game for the honor of a team, or pool their separate thought in constructing and carrying into effect a single plan, or who simply share the needs and desires of a common humanity."⁵⁹

In conclusion, the Old Testament and New Testament texts reveals the grace and mercy of God and the work of His Son Jesus Christ in redemption. The call of Jeremiah is shown in the Old Testament text amidst Jeremiah's expressed feelings of inadequacy and we see God making provision for him and giving him all the tools he needed to succeed in his new assignment. Moses was called as well as Gideon and despite their shortcomings they received boldness from God and declared the word they had received unto the people. The same is true of us believers today, for when God calls us most of the time, we are not the best candidate to be chosen but because of his grace and mercy he chooses whom he wants to choose and equips that person to carry out the job. In the New Testament text we see Christ proclaimed for who he is: the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, all powers or rulers, thrones, authority and dominion belongs to him. Now we have been reconciled by the blood of Christ unto God and as long as we remain in Christ we can have all that is in Christ, "for in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28a). In the Old Testament texts we see God call

⁵⁹ Basil Matthews and Henry Bisseker, *Fellowship in Thought and Prayer; Fellowship as a Means of Building the Christian Social Order*.

men to deliver his message of restoration to the people. In Colossians we see Christ revealed in the hymns as he restores the universe back unto God through his sacrifice. There is provision in Jesus Christ for the believer's developmental process to spiritual growth and maturation. After the call to salvation, the believer has authority over nations, rulers and powers spiritually just as Jeremiah was given in Verse 10. He or she must abide in the teaching of Christ along with the process to maturation as enumerated above by the writer, which includes fellowship with other believers, hearing the word of God preached regularly, a life of prayer, being alone with God in personal quiet time, mentoring and discipleship, unwavering faith in God, attending Sunday school and Bible studies in small groups where questions can be asked and being involved in congregational worship. Many leaders of old and of our time have taught these truths of the word of God and have had great impact on the Church.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

The historical foundation for this paper is based on Phoebe Palmer. The Church has been impacted by many leaders over centuries that changed the course of doing church as business as usual. Individuals have boldly stood for what they believed based on the word of God. So many have built on the legacy of others. Many have introduced theology that they have personally experienced and have been passionate in sharing their heartfelt revelation or their journey and leaving spiritual landmarks for other believers which led to a shift in the body of Christ while they lived and way after they were gone. Such a person was Phoebe Palmer. This writer has examined the life of Palmer and the influences that helped shape her life and beliefs. A look at the life and impact that Mrs. Palmer had on the Holiness movement and the ability of believers to live a sanctified life here on earth. She encountered criticism and oppositions from other theologians. The writer has also explored what she believed, when and who she impacted, where her impact was felt the most and why she is recognized as having made a difference in her generation.

Phoebe Worrall Palmer was born in New York on December 18, 1807. Palmer grew up in a religious culture heavily influenced by Wesleyanism. In 1827, she married Walter Clarke Palmer, a physician and a leader in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He

supported her so that she could participate full time in evangelistic efforts. They had six children but only three of them survived.¹ Her father was converted in England under John Wesley's preaching and set up a staunch Methodist home when he immigrated to America. Phoebe embraced her parents' Methodist faith as a child and continued in that tradition all her life.² Miskov writes that her life changed at nine o'clock, on the evening of July 26, 1837, when she experienced "entire sanctification." Three of her children had died in infancy.

As she grieved over her loss, Phoebe Palmer was convinced that God had taken her children because she had loved them too much and because she was spending too much time on them. She resolved to completely surrender everything she held dear to God, promising that she would be obedient to anything He required.³ After this life changing encounter, the next thirty-seven years of her life would witness the implications of the commitment she made that evening as she devoted herself to serving God. This sanctification experience significantly led to her public evangelism and journalism. Miskov continues that Palmer's passion to see transformation in people led her to evangelize New York by going into Prisons, conducting meetings, serving the poor, and speaking engagements at camp and revival meetings. She taught a Tuesday holiness and

¹ Jennifer A. Miskov, "Missing links: Phoebe Palmer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, and holiness roots within Pentecostalism." *Pentecostudies* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 8-28, accessed December 10, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

² Ibid. 10.

³ Ibid. 28.

prayer meetings which helped further Wesleyan holiness revivalism throughout the nineteenth century.⁴

Miskov asserts that Palmer organized these gatherings on Tuesday “for the Promotion of Holiness” in New York City, from 1835-1874; because she believed that believers can live a holy life that was set free from sin’s power.⁵ According to Miskov, the original meetings were started by her sister Sarah, but Palmer emerged as the main leader. By 1839, the meetings were so successful that it was opened to men and it also attracted other denominations, including Baptists, Quakers, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Mennonites.⁶ There were many different expressions of Christian Perfectionism and holiness throughout American history. Much of the Holiness movement’s theology was rooted in John Wesley’s teachings. Other notable figures that contributed to the movement were Charles Finney and Asa Mahans, whose practices of revivalism impacted the development of the Holiness movement. As the Holiness movement developed, which had positively influenced her life; Palmer’s numerous modifications to Wesley’s doctrines greatly impacted the movement.⁷

Miskov opines that both Wesley and Palmer agreed that sanctification was a second work of grace, but Palmer specifically simplified and modified his doctrine to

⁴ Jennifer A. Miskov, "Missing links: Phoebe Palmer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, and holiness roots within Pentecostalism." *Pentecostudies* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 8-28, accessed December 10, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁵ Ibid. 10.

⁶ Ibid. 28.

⁷ Ibid. 11.

make it more accessible to everyone.⁸ “She agreed with John Fletcher's connection of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with entire sanctification and built upon Adam Clarke's ideas to connect holiness with power. She additionally emphasized immediate sanctification more than a gradual process. From Clarke, she drew on the concept that entire sanctification was not the end goal but the beginning of the Christian life.”⁹ Miskov continues that Palmer was famous for her “altar theology,” which made sanctification accessible in three stages which included entire consecration, faith, and sharing one's testimony and she advocated that the truth in the Bible alone could be the proof for entire sanctification and not emotional feelings.¹⁰

In 1859 Palmer published *The Promise of the Father; or a Neglected Specialty of the Last Days* that not only supported women in ministry but emphasized the need for the full baptism of the Holy Spirit.¹¹ In 1870, the Palmers continued this theme when they published Asa Mahan's *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost*. Palmer's emphasis on this subject was a key development for the Holiness movement and eventually an important influence in the Pentecostal movement to come.¹² Palmer based her theology on the six modifications. According to Miskov, though various strands emerged from within the Holiness movement, much of its theology was rooted in Wesley's teachings, perfection, synonymous with holiness, entire sanctification, and perfect love” was a second work of

⁸ Jennifer A. Miskov, "Missing links: Phoebe Palmer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, and holiness roots within Pentecostalism." *Pentecostudies* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 8-28, accessed December 10, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁹ Ibid. 10.

¹⁰ Ibid. 20

¹¹ Ibid. 13

¹² Ibid. 13.

grace that was separate from salvation. Miskov concludes that Palmer believed and taught extensively on the following six modifications to Wesley's doctrine on

Sanctification: Palmer's modifications are as follows:-

1. Connection of Holy Spirit baptism with entire Sanctification

John Fletcher was one of the early theologians to connect entire sanctification with the Spirit baptism given at Pentecost, a foundation which Palmer built upon.¹³

2. Holiness is Power

Palmer taught that the result of sanctification was empowerment. She blended the tradition of Wesleyan "perfection" and "holiness" themes with Pentecostal precepts of "power" She believed that there was power to live a holy life and also suggested that "purity and power are identical." This power was the basis for living the Higher Christian life and maintaining "moral purity" more than it was for the purpose of service.¹⁴

3. Immediate Rather than Gradual Sanctification

Palmer moved beyond Wesley's tension of gradualism and instantaneity in regards to sanctification when she chose to modify his doctrine towards entire sanctification so that it was available now, immediately, instantly. She believed it was immediate and that when you completely surrender your life and make that commitment to serve God and do his will, you can receive the

¹³ Jennifer A. Miskov, "Missing links: Phoebe Palmer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, and holiness roots within Pentecostalism." *Pentecostudies* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 8-28, accessed December 10, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁴ Ibid. 13.

gift of sanctification. She also believed that it was available to all who wanted to receive it. She did not believe that you have to wait for it.¹⁵

4. Sanctification - Not the End Goal but the Beginning of Christian Life

The next part of Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection that Palmer modified was the order in which sanctification would occur. Wesley believed that sanctification was more of a goal to be attained than something to be currently realized. Palmer took Wesley's doctrine one step further and applied it to the present rather than as some futuristic goal. Not only did she believe entire sanctification could happen immediately she also embraced that fact and realized it in her own life. She was most effective in preaching this theology because she had a personal experience.¹⁶

5. Altar Theology

The fifth modification Palmer applied to Wesley's doctrine was implementing a three step process termed "altar theology" composed of entire consecration, faith, and testimony. For Palmer, the first step was that one had to surrender and lay all at the altar, symbolic of laying all down at the feet of Jesus.¹⁷ After quoting 1 Corinthians 6.20, Miskov stated that Palmer wrote, "By this she perceived entire consecration to be more sacredly binding than ever before" Secondly, she believed that the believer must take it by faith, just as in salvation, the believer is justified by faith. Thirdly, Palmer also believed that

¹⁵ Jennifer A. Miskov, "Missing links: Phoebe Palmer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, and holiness roots within Pentecostalism." *Pentecostudies* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 8-28, accessed December 10, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁶ Ibid. 16.

¹⁷ Ibid. 18.

the believer has to testify to the experience they now have. Just as in salvation, when you testify or confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior.¹⁸

6. Bible as Proof of Sanctification (not Emotionalism)

The sixth modification Palmer made to Wesley's doctrine was to de-emphasize the place of feelings in relation to one's sanctification experience. Miskov writes that for Palmer "the witness of the Spirit, giving assurance of full salvation, was not some subjective experience, but was the objective word of Scripture." There was no inner witness or warm feeling one had to experience to know for sure that they were sanctified.¹⁹ Palmer's widespread publication of books, meetings and revivals helped mold the pneumatology of the Holiness movement and she was recognized for her work. Her modification on Wesley's theology were incorporated into the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness in 1867 as well as in the forms and practices of subsequent holiness denominations.²⁰ Miskov concludes that her strong emphases on power, the instantaneous reception of sanctification possible for the believer, and her systematic and shorter approach to attaining it were some of her main contributions to the Holiness movement and beyond.²¹

¹⁸ Jennifer A. Miskov, "Missing links: Phoebe Palmer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, and holiness roots within Pentecostalism." *Pentecostudies* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 8-28, accessed December 10, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁹ Ibid. 19.

²⁰ Ibid. 25.

²¹ Ibid. 25.

White writes that Palmer began her career as a theologian by penning religious verse, then branched out to write articles and books. She got her start as a revivalist by filling in for her husband at a class-meeting, and eventually crossed the continent and the Atlantic to preach the good news with her husband later on in her ministry. White continues that she started speaking at a women's prayer meeting and went on to produce a full-scale defense of women's ministries. From distributing tracts in poor neighborhoods, she moved on to the establishment of one of the nation's first settlement houses.²² Phoebe Palmer was a theologian. She published eighteen books and the *Guide to Holiness*, and she edited these from 1864 to 1874, which explained her theology. White asserts that some male Methodist leaders refused to take her seriously as a theologian, but she was an important teacher of theological truth to the bishops, professors, and editors who came to weekly meetings in her home, the thirty-seven thousand who subscribed to her magazine, and to the hundreds of thousands who read her books.²³ Phoebe Palmer believed entire sanctification was not the end of the Christian life, but its beginning. One must be holy not only to get into heaven, but also to live properly here on earth.²⁴

White opines that the Christian has the obligation to believe that God has done the work of sanctification because in 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1 God promised to receive the offering of those who separate themselves from all evil through entire consecration. Whether or not one felt any different after every area of the life was devoted to the Lord, to doubt that one was entirely sanctified was to doubt God's Word. Finally the believer

²² Charles Edward White, "The beauty of holiness: the career of Phoebe Palmer." *Fides Et Historia* 19, no. 1 (February 1, 1987): 22-34, accessed December 10, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²³ Ibid. 24.

²⁴ Ibid. 25.

must publicly bear witness that sanctification has occurred. Romans 10:9-10 requires public profession as well as heart faith for God's work to be effective. So important is this final step that Mrs. Palmer warned those who do not confess the blessing that they will not retain the blessing.²⁵

White writes that in Palmer's meetings and revivals many professed entire sanctification, and some established similar "Tuesday Meetings" in 238 places, some as far away as England, India, and New Zealand. J. Edwin Orr, a noted historian of awakenings, attributes the beginning of the 1858 awakening to Mrs. Palmer's ministry. He says that reports of her success in Canada in 1857 stimulated the American prayer revival of the following spring. An estimated one million converts joined American churches as a result of that revival.²⁶ Palmer's influence was not only felt at home but internationally.

White concludes that when British Christians read reports of the outpouring of the Spirit in the United States and Canada, they copied the Americans' methods and witnessed similar results. An estimated one and one-half million converts were added to the churches of the United Kingdom. Walter and Phoebe Palmer followed the revival to England. They spent almost four years in itinerant evangelism and led more than 17,300 to "pardon or purity."²⁷ Walter gave up his medical practice to make this journey. He did not resume it when they returned to the States, but joined Phoebe in her extensive travels. Besides leading more than 17,300 Britons and untold thousands of Americans to Christ,

²⁵ Charles Edward White, "The beauty of holiness: the career of Phoebe Palmer." *Fides Et Historia* 19, no. 1 (February 1, 1987): 22-34, accessed December 10, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²⁶ Ibid, 27.

²⁷ Ibid, 28.

Mrs. Palmer made another contribution to revivalism by first preaching to those already converted and asking them to go out and seek the lost and insisted for the church to hold evangelistic meetings where the members can invite their friends and neighbors. Names were to be documented by secretaries, new converts were to be visited and encouraged to go and win souls too. It was important, Palmer said for the church to publish the result so that God will get the glory.²⁸

Howard writes that "It is not surprising that Mrs. Palmer's teaching aroused antagonism." It was obviously contrary to Wesley, but it was also counter to the general teaching of Methodist advocates of the experience.²⁹ Howard continues that, Randolph S. Foster, prominent Methodist, criticized Mrs. Palmer's position as tending to delusion and to "spurious though sincere professions." He added, "Until the witness comes we will not say we are entirely sanctified." Nathan Bangs also criticized her position. The controversy reached such proportions that the General Conference in the Pastoral Address in 1852 said: "We advise you in writing of holiness, to follow the well sustained views, and even the phraseology employed in the writings of Wesley and Fletcher, which are not superseded by the more recent writers on the subject. Avoid both new theories, new expressions, and new measures on the subject, and adhere closely to the ancient landmarks."³⁰

²⁸ Charles Edward White, "The beauty of holiness: the career of Phoebe Palmer." *Fides Et Historia* 19, no. 1 (February 1, 1987): 22-34, accessed December 10, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²⁹ Ivan Howard, "Wesley versus Phoebe Palmer: an extended controversy." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 1971): 31-40, accessed December 12, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 36.

Howard concludes that "Mrs. Palmer was in no way dismayed. She defended her position with such clear reasoning and from a vantage point of such high esteem within Methodism that Timothy Smith asserts that "her views won out." This is too strong a statement, for the years following shows much confusion as to the method of obtaining entire sanctification, and also concerning its evidence."³¹ Phoebe Palmer influenced many lives and her theology helped prepare the way for many women and men in ministry, one of whom was Carrie Judd Montgomery, who drew upon her theology and advanced it into the American Divine Healing and Pentecostal movements.³² Phoebe Palmer died on November 2, 1874.

In conclusion, over the centuries many men and women have contributed to the growth of the Christian church. Men and women that have left indelible mark on their generation through what they believed. Phoebe Palmer was one of those people. This writer has tried to look at the life, theology, influences and impact that she has made in the church and how she would be remembered for a long time to come. The work of Phoebe Palmer has had a great impact on the Holiness movement both here in the United States and also worldwide. She was most effective in her theology because of her personal experience of sanctification as a second work of grace, which she preached. She was influenced by John Wesley's theology but went further to simplify the message of sanctification by faith and how to receive it. Her early childhood was greatly influenced by her father who was a Methodist and made sure that he trained his family in the way to

³¹ Ivan Howard, "Wesley versus Phoebe Palmer: an extended controversy." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 1971): 31-40, accessed December 12, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost. 36.

³² Jennifer A. Miskov, "Missing links: Phoebe Palmer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, and holiness roots within Pentecostalism." *Pentecostudies* 10, no. 1 (January 1, 2011): 8-28, accessed December 10, 2013, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

go according to the Scriptures. Her success can be attributed also to the personal experience of sanctification by faith that she had. She had many critics but she was not perturbed because she strongly believed and was persuaded that the word of God was the final say and not your emotional feelings. She was able to impact many lives at home and abroad through her books, articles, editorials, revivals, “Tuesday Meetings” for the promotion of Holiness, outreaches to the poor and homeless. She was committed to and passionate about what she believed and her impact is still felt in many churches and denominations today.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

The theological foundation for this paper is Sanctification. Many theologians have influenced Christianity and the doctrine of Sanctification in Christian history. Many have contributed largely to the Pentecostal holiness movement in thought, transformation and how to receive the grace of sanctification. John Wesley and Phoebe Palmer, a Methodist laywoman had a lot in common, both believed in the doctrine of sanctification and one of the differences they had was in the process by which sanctification is attained. Phoebe Palmer believed in the doctrine of sanctification. God called men and women in the OT and NT era to serve him, proclaim his message to a group of people and to the world. Whoever he called he gave the ability to do that for which he has called him or her. In the present dispensation, God is still calling people to serve him and deliver his message to groups of people and to the world today. He continues to equip those called through his word and other means (dreams, visions, audible instructions etc.) The writer in this paper looked at the theological foundations of sanctification (Christian perfection or holiness), God's purpose for the believer in living a sanctified, holy life before a God who is holy. Theology that surrounds it and the need for sanctification was also examined and how that can be applied to our daily lives in the present millennium.

God's call to all believers is to first and foremost receive his gift of salvation to be transformed from the kingdom of darkness (sin) into his marvelous light (the kingdom of God). Subsequent to justification, God desires that all his followers be rooted and grounded in the word and his love and be Christ-like. This gift is the gift of sanctification followed by the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, similar to the outpouring on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. These gifts can be received at the same time or at different times depending on the hunger and thirst of the believer for these gifts and also the revelation that the believer has regarding these gifts. It has all been paid for by our Lord and Savior on the Cross at Calvary. They are all free gifts available to the child of God, but the believer cannot avail themselves of these gift except they have a revelation, believe and receive in faith the finished work of Calvary on their behalf.

Every believer is to be totally surrendered (Christian perfection) and walk towards greater conformity to the image of Christ. When God is asking us to be perfect or holy what He is asking of us is for us to be totally surrendered to his will. God told Abraham to walk before him and be perfect or blameless. This in another sense is for Abraham to be totally surrendered to him so that He can carry out his will in Abraham's life. When God calls a man like he called Jeremiah, he equips the one he has called and expects total surrender so that his will can be fully carried out in the life of the individual. This is repeated in the lives of so many men and women of God all through the Bible and in the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ when he was on earth. He was totally surrendered to the will of the Father and that culminated in him being able to fulfil his calling and saving mankind. It would have been a different story for the human race if

Jesus Christ had not been totally surrendered to the will of the Father, we would all have been miserable and lost for eternity.

In Colossians we read that Christians are to be rooted and grounded in the word of God so that they will be matured, perfect or totally surrendered to the will of the Father. In order to enjoy the full benefit of the new life in Christ, the believer has to be totally surrendered. Sanctification, perfection, holiness or total surrender is subsequent to justification of the believer. As justification is by faith so also is sanctification by faith. Many believers have only known of and experienced justification by faith: that is being born again, accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They stop at this point and do not experience the work of sanctification by faith which has been purchased by Christ on the cross of Calvary for every believer. God commands us to be holy for without which no man shall see the Lord. If it was something impossible, the Lord would not have asked this of us. If God commands it he will make available the ability for believers to be totally surrendered to him.

Believers must be willing to accept this grace as a gift from God, desire to receive sanctification and to walk before the Lord blameless. Many might come to the conclusion that since we are still in this earth it will not be possible to live a holy life, to be perfect or matured, or to be totally surrendered to God. Many might argue that there are too many distractions in our world and in our day to day activities it will be impossible for us to live a holy life. But we are reminded that Jesus Christ is our example, the Bible tells us that he was on this earth as a man and he did not commit any sin. Jesus Christ knew who he was, he knew his identity and that was why he was able to be totally surrendered to the will of the Father. We look back at his baptism in the river

Jordan, as he came out of the water the “heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16b). Also we as believers should know who we are and our identity is in Christ, because in Jeremiah we are told “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). Christ knew he could not do anything without the Father, so also believers cannot and should not do anything without Christ. Everything Christ did was driven by his love for his Father, likewise all that we do should be driven by our love for God. The question put to Peter comes to mind, “Do you love me?” “Keep my commandment” If we say we love God, we will keep his commandment. We will want to please him. We will daily be surrendered to his will.

Many scandals that we hear of today can be avoided in Christian circles if more attention was paid to being totally surrendered to the will of the one who has called us. God who commissioned us will also make the provision. The ability that we did not know or realize that we had will be made manifest through his grace and his grace alone, an example is Gideon and Moses. Colossians 1:21-23 states that we were once enemies of God through our wicked works but have now been reconciled to God through Christ through his death to present us holy and blameless and above reproach (perfect) in God’s sight. Verse 23 goes on to say that if we continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast (rooted) and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which we heard preached unto us, we are perfected, matured as we totally surrender to the will of the Father.

The Doctrine of Sanctification

There is a whole lot of misconception out there about sanctification, some believing that if you are holy or perfect before God that means that you do not make mistakes or that you are error proof. That is not the case, the only difference though, is that when a righteous, holy or perfect person makes an error or a mistake, he is quick to repent and correct his ways. He recognizes that his holiness is achieved by the grace of God alone, so there is no arrogance on his part but total reliance on God. He does not deliberately sin, and when he falls he does not remain there but seeks forgiveness and forsakes his error and turns a new leaf. David was called a man after God's own heart. Was it because David did not make errors or mistakes in his life? I believe he was called a man after God's own heart because he was quick to repent each time he was in error. What then is the meaning of Sanctification? Sanctification is the act of God's grace whereby we are set apart and made holy. It is the second work of grace where God takes our stony heart and gives us a heart of flesh/compassion. It is subsequent to justification. We have a responsibility to lay our lives down at the Altar daily to maintain that heart of flesh and a sanctified life as long as we remain in this world. When we believe we can never be good enough for God, we fall into despair but if we accept the finished work on Calvary, we are able to receive the gift of sanctification (Jesus died outside the gates for our sanctification) Hebrews 13:12 says "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate". When believers are fully surrendered to God they can walk perfectly before him and be blameless like Abraham did. By the sacrifice of Christ on the cross the community of believers is sanctified as we read in Ephesians 5:26-27 "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that

he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

According to Cubie “the soul is treated as a metaphysical entity, which is distinct from the entire person, a continuation of the writings of the Christian church from the second century until the middle of the twentieth. It is present in the Christian tradition which informed John and Charles Wesley and is present both in their writings and in the writings of Methodism in the nineteenth century. This tradition influenced the exegesis of the 1 Thess. 5:23, which is central to the hermeneutic of the doctrine of "entire sanctification.”¹ Cubie also refers to “entire sanctification” as a platonic doctrine of the soul. Cubie went on to say that “Yet the term disappeared from the “Articles of Faith” and rituals Manual of the Church of the Nazarene by the end of the twentieth century. The only usage of "soul" in the statements on entire sanctification appeared in 1898 and 1903, when the Church of the Nazarene was largely a west coast movement.”² Barrick believes that “Sanctification is inseparable from regeneration; where there is one, the other must also exist. Sanctification is the process of making holy, whether in the OT or the NT. God's holiness is complete, comparable to no one else, and is incompatible with sin. Man's holiness is progressive as it seeks to match the holiness of God in dedicating everything to Him. Both Testaments multiply references to God's holiness as the foundation for human holiness. The believer progresses in his own sanctification through

¹ David L. Cubie, "Entire" sanctification, the platonic doctrine of the soul, and First Thessalonians 5:23." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 45, no. 2 (September 1, 2010): 136-160, accessed March 7, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost. 138.

² Ibid. 137.

the ministry of the Holy Spirit and through attention to the Scripture, but humans also have a role in sanctification. They must live out what they possess by the grace of God.”³

Barrick stated that “James calls believers to be alert to the harm of being spiritually adulterous or friends with the world (Jas 4:4). Instead, the believer should seek to be a friend of Christ—he ought to submit to God, draw near to God, cleanse his hands, and purify his heart (v. 7-8). As the children of God, Christians must demonstrate a Christlikeness in their behavior—a behavior that avoids entanglement with the world.”⁴ Barrick went on to say that “A proper view of the saints' sanctification must include an accurate understanding of the holiness of God. His holiness is the foundation of believers' holiness, as Peter's admonition recalls: "but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior" (1 Pet 1.15).⁵

According to Yong Amos “Human beings participate in Gods sanctifying work—this is the traditional Wesleyan doctrine of salvation that emphasizes synergistic cooperation with the divine initiatives—so that, while it is God who purifies imperfect creatures, the latter have some responsibility in the process. As St. Paul admonished the Philippian Christians: “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12b-13). Yong further asserts that “the means of sanctifying grace include the classical

³ David L. Cubie, "Entire" sanctification, the platonic doctrine of the soul, and First Thessalonians 5:23." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 45, no. 2 (September 1, 2010): accessed March 7, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost. 136.

⁴ William D. Barrick, "Sanctification: the work of the Holy Spirit and scripture." *Master's Seminary Journal* 21, no. 2 (September 1, 2010): 179-191, accessed March 7, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost. 179.

⁵ Ibid. 182.

disciplines of scripture reading, prayer, and the sacraments within the fullness of ecclesial life.”⁶

White opines that Phoebe Palmer was born in New York in 1807 and died there in 1974 but left her influence and legacy in the holiness movement, and that “as a theologian she provided the link between John Wesley and the Pentecostals by modifying his theology of Christian perfection. White went on to say that “she simplified and popularized John Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification, modifying it in six different ways. First, she followed John Fletcher in his identification of entire sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Second, she developed Adam Clarke's suggestion and linked holiness with power. Third, like Clarke, she stressed the instantaneous elements of sanctification to the exclusion of the gradual. Fourth, again following Clarke, she taught that entire sanctification is not really the goal of the Christian life, but rather its beginning. Fifth, through her "altar theology" she reduced the attainment of sanctification to a simple three-stage process of entire consecration, faith, and testimony. Sixth, she held that one needed no evidence other than the Biblical text to be assured of entire sanctification. Each of these changes was later incorporated into the pneumatology of the Pentecostal movement.”⁷ White stated that “although Phoebe Palmer did not think of herself as a theologian, the eighteen books she published and the *Guide to Holiness*, which she edited from 1864 to 1874, constantly explicated her theological ideas.”⁸ There

⁶ Amos Yong, "Sanctification, science, and the spirit: salvaging holiness in the late modern world." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 47, no. 2 (September 1, 2012): 36-52, accessed March 9, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁷ Charles Edward White, "Phoebe Palmer and the development of Pentecostal pneumatology." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 23, no. 1-2 (March 1, 1988): 198-212, accessed March 11, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁸ Ibid. 24.

was opposition and resistance to Phoebe Palmer's theory of sanctification as "some male Methodist leaders refused to take her seriously as a theologian, but to the bishops, professors, and editors who came to weekly meetings in her home, to the thirty-seven thousand who subscribed to her magazine, and to the hundreds of thousands who read her books, she was an important teacher of theological truth."⁹ Lowery opines that "of her numerous publications, her books *The Way of Holiness*, *Faith and Its Effects*, and *Promise of the Father* (which argues for the legitimacy of women in ministry) are perhaps the most notable."¹⁰

Similar to John Wesley, Phoebe Palmer taught that entire sanctification is a second distinct work of grace in which God cleanses the believer's heart of sin, and fills it wholly with His love. Such heart holiness is a requirement for entry into heaven. Because God commands it, He must also supply the ability to attain it, and He gives that ability in response to the Christian's faith.¹¹ It is important to note that "John Fletcher, Wesley's lieutenant, was the first theologian to equate the experience of entire sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost."¹² There are three main differences between the Holiness Movement (in which Palmer played a major role in its history) and John Wesley theory on entire sanctification. Lowery believes that First, the Holiness

⁹ Charles Edward White, "Phoebe Palmer and the development of Pentecostal pneumatology." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 23, no. 1-2 (March 1, 1988): 198-212, accessed March 11, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁰ Kevin T. Lowery, "A fork in the Wesleyan road: Phoebe Palmer and the appropriation of Christian perfection." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 36, no. 2 (September 1, 2001): 187-222, accessed March 13, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹¹ Charles Edward White, "Phoebe Palmer and the development of Pentecostal pneumatology." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 23, no. 1-2 (March 1, 1988): 198-212, accessed March 11, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹² *Ibid.* 199.

Movement's methodology has traditionally been more strict and rigid than that of Wesley. The Holiness Movement proposed specific steps that would produce perfection, but Wesley's approach was more open-ended. Second, whereas Wesley only utilized the testimony of individuals in specific cases where it might prove especially helpful, Palmer and her followers considered testimony a duty and a necessary means of retaining the "blessing." Third, the moment in which perfection is attained is, in Wesley's mind, both preceded and followed by a gradual process. In contrast, the Holiness Movement has often isolated the event from the process. It is suggested that purity (which is achieved by an instantaneous volitional act) can be separated from maturity (which is achieved by a gradual, more intellectual process)."¹³

Kevin Lowery states that "whereas Wesley exhorts the believer to continually expect to reach perfection, Palmer asserts that one cannot even expect it until the decision is made to perform continuous unreserved consecration."¹⁴ Lowery went further to suggest that her model for consecration is that of a sacrifice being made on an altar. Romans 12:1-2 exhorts us to present ourselves as "living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God." However, Palmer, Lowery insists, believes that the act of consecration, in and of itself, will not make anyone holy. Holiness is achieved because "the altar sanctifies the gift." In essence, the gift is sanctified by virtue of the altar, i.e., there is something particular about the altar that renders it able to bestow holiness."¹⁵ I do believe that entire sanctification is instantaneous as well as gradual. According to Palmer's theory, you can

¹³ Kevin T. Lowery, "A fork in the Wesleyan road: Phoebe Palmer and the appropriation of Christian perfection." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 36, no. 2 (September 1, 2001): 187-222, accessed March 13, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁴ Ibid. 194.

¹⁵ Ibid. 194.

come to the Altar in total surrender to the will of God and be instantaneously sanctified and made holy. Because we still live in this sinful world, each believer has to work out their sanctification with fear and trembling. Each believer has a responsibility to go through the process of making sure that they remain sanctified. It can be likened to the grace in justification. A believer is instantly justified once you confess your sins, ask for forgiveness, believe in the finished work of redemption by Jesus Christ and confess him as your Lord and Savior, you are instantly saved. However, you have a responsibility to work out your salvation with fear and trembling by not deliberately sinning and going away from the kingdom of God. We have a responsibility to renew our minds after being justified so that we might change from the old way of thinking to the correct way a child of God is supposed to think. So also, in sanctification, you are instantly sanctified but you have a responsibility to walk in the spirit and walk in the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit. You have a responsibility to consecrate yourself and separate yourself from the world to maintain your holiness. Paul said I put my body under, I die daily. As long as we are in this flesh temptations will come, we might find ourselves in circumstances that will make us to compromise the word of God, in consecration we remember we love God too much to commit the sin for a season. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit can be likened to this theory as well, when a believer is baptized with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives you utterance, it is instantaneous. However, it is your responsibility to exercise your faith and pray in tongues, speak in tongues and sing in other tongues as the Spirit gives you utterance, to keep the experience going in your Christian life.

Finally, the love for God will enable a believer be willing to totally surrender their lives to the will of God. Love for God will make you reach out and love your fellow man as God loves them irrespective of their color, creed or societal status. Stanley Johnson affirms that "the Centrality of Love for God in John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection is one of the most crucial texts in his literature as John Wesley quotes Jesus directly: ¹⁶ "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

According to Johnson when asked the question "What is Christian Perfection?" Wesley responds: The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and all the thoughts, words and actions are governed by pure love.¹⁷ Johnson believes that Wesley's "abridgment" of the twofold commandment is significant. He cuts across the grain of all theologians who produce anthropologies of love, forthrightly insisting that the Christian is perfected primarily in love for God. A theology of love is intended.¹⁸ To another question, "What command is there" for Christian perfection or entire sanctification? Wesley answers: "Be ye perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." (Matt.5 v. 48.) (2.) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and

¹⁶ Stanley W. Johnson, "Christian perfection as love for God." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 18, no. 1 (March 1, 1983): 50-60, accessed March 14, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁷ Ibid. 51.

¹⁸ Ibid. 51.

with all thy mind." (Matt 22:37). But if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin there.¹⁹

I absolutely agree with Wesley, in that when you love someone you will do everything in your power to please that person. You will not want to do anything that will displease them. Same thing, if we love God, we will not want to sin against him. If we know how much God loves us, we will want to love him with all our being. We will obey his commandments and do everything in our power to please him. Obedience to his word will be paramount in our life daily. Living a life of total surrender (sanctification) to God's will then will not be a struggle for the believer.

The theology of sanctification goes hand in hand with justification. After the individual is called out of darkness into the marvelous light of God the Father, he or she needs to know how to walk holy before a holy God and be blameless. God has made provision for that walk before the foundations of the world. It is a walk that is attainable through the grace of the one who has called you and in this case the church as a community. Individuals are called all through the Old Testament and the New Testament era for service and are equipped for what they have been called to do. Believers all through the ages are admonished to work out their faith with fear and trembling. They are to walk circumspectly before God. The gift of sanctification is available to all believers to enable them live a holy life and be Christ-like. The process of sanctification is where many theologians have their differences. Undoubtedly, sanctification is a work of grace for the church as a community of believers. The Bible says ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you... believers need to ask,

¹⁹ Stanley W. Johnson, "Christian perfection as love for God." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 18, no. 1 (March 1, 1983): 50-60, accessed March 14, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

seek and knock on the doors of heaven for the gift of sanctification and God is faithful to give us the grace to enable us live holy and righteous before him. The writer has looked at the theory of sanctification and how we are affected today.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Men and women are being called of God today as in the days of old. After they accept the call, the purpose of God is for everyone he has called to mature spiritually and be able to affect his/her environment for good. In this project the writer is going to examine the social sciences and how the context, women in the Redeemed Christian Church of God are psychologically impacted in their day to day lifestyle. Also to be examined is the role of women in the church, what are the challenges facing Nigerians when they move into the United States and what makes RCCG unique as a church, plus the contributions or effect of the church in the community. A close look at the results of over busyness of our families today, how that distracts us from higher order thinking and the process that can be employed to allow for spiritual growth.

In the Old Testament text for this project Jeremiah 1:1-10, we see God call a man to fulfill a purpose and a destiny. God testified that he knew, ordained and predestined Jeremiah before he was formed in his mother's womb to go to the nations and proclaim his message of judgment, hope and reconciliation. Despite Jeremiah's opposition and expression of inadequacy, God steps forward to equip him by putting his word in Jeremiah's mouth and assuring him that he will be with him and that he should not fear. Jeremiah was commanded to warn the people of the judgment and wrath of God if they continued in their disobedience and of eventual restoration due to the mercy and grace of

God. In the New Testament text for this project, Colossians 1:12-23, we equally see the person of Jesus Christ acknowledged as the firstborn of the Father, who has sovereignty for whom everything was made and who has all power and dominion. The text also speaks about believers growing to maturity and perfection while here on earth if they will obey the teaching of Jesus Christ and continue in his doctrine whereby they will be rooted and grounded in faith. Paul in Colossians admonishes believers to hold on to the faith which they had received and grow thereby. In today's world believers will grow into the image of Christ and mature in the things of God if they continue in the teaching of Jesus Christ and abide in him. First the call and then maturity is a process in the walk with Jesus Christ. It has not changed. People are receiving salvation daily and the same process is required in Colossians 1:12 for each one to realize the finished work that Jesus Christ has done and the charge to go forward and walk, live and abide in the teachings of Christ so that the believer can be rooted and grounded in the faith. Knowing who you are in Christ helps the believer's sense of identity. Colossians expands on the need for the new believer to not depart from the word that he has received, so that the fullness of Christ can be developed in him/her. The women of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, House on the Rock parish as the context in this project desires to move from where they are to the next level in spiritual maturity and conformity to the image of Christ.

Women in RCCG House on the Rock identify with the need to take the word that has been preached, abide and mature in Christ. Social economic status does play a major role in identity since most of the members are educated and professionals, while many are medium income and low income earners, but like many communities, there are still those in the congregation that need help, be it social or economic. The psychological

challenges might be with adaptation to the new environment by those that are coming into the country and community for the first time. The stress of having to perform two or three things at the same time; like taking care of family, holding a job and trying to go back to school, can be overwhelming. This challenge is minimized because new members coming in from Nigeria are surrounded with people of like minds, core values and beliefs. The body of Christ rallies round the new comer and needs like a place to stay, clothing, food, a babysitter are provided and assistance in securing employment are given. Therefore integration into the society and community is quicker and easy for the new comer. As the believer juggles different aspects of life, family, career, ministry, business and education, he/she is able to integrate these goals because of the support network available. For some, however, it takes a longer time to settle down into their new home, culture, society and country. The theoretical foundation for this paper is Social Science, with emphasis on culture and society. Society plays a major role in marriages.

How does society influence our marriages? How does the culture in which we live affect relationships? How does Social Media, TV, Radio, Facebook, Twitter; Instagram impact our way of life? Is it possible to live a sanctified life in a marriage relationships in this culture? These are the questions the author attempted to answer in this paper. Social science plays a significant role in our marriages, culture and society.

Marriage is an ordained institution by God as we see in Genesis 2:24. It is a covenant relationship that can only be broken by death. It is the union of a man and a woman in a relationship where they have pledged before a community of people and God to love and cherish each other and be solely committed to one another till the end of their lives. Culture, which is the way of life and predominant beliefs of the society in which a

couple lives can influence their marriage relationship for good or for bad. In a union you find two people coming from different cultures in some instances, or different religious backgrounds as the case may be. The Bible warns against being unequally yoked in a marriage relationship because this can spell the success or doom of the union. Each individual in the marriage hopefully would have learnt a thing or two about the other's culture and background before committing to a life-long relationship. Everyday hustle and bustle can affect a relationship where enough time is not spent to nurture the marriage, people working two jobs and hardly have time to listen to each other.

Accelerated pace of life and mobility; affects every member of any denomination in general, and women of RCCG- House on the Rock (my context) in particular. The movement of our population results in instability for the members, children are uprooted from schools and neighborhood friends and this impacts the local church community to which they belong in that fewer people attend church services. The weekend is a time for get-away, camping, vacations, cruises, visit to the second home on the shore, Hawaii, Vermont or exotic resorts which people can get to any time of the year. This prevents couples from integration into the community or having the opportunity to have deep roots in the church community.

People do not stay in their communities on the weekends and the constant moving of families has led to decline in church attendance and negates the individuals being rooted and grounded in the doctrines of the Bible. Our secular culture have influenced those who were not totally surrendered to Christ, who were not involved in a community of believers to try to find activities to fill that void, activities that take them farther away from being conformed to the image of Christ.

The challenge that the church has is a fast paced lifestyle. The society is demanding time, resources and sapping the energy of individuals and people feel they have to meet the needs of these demands than that of the church to fellowship with other believers, commitment to serving God and serving fellow worshippers which deals with ultimate meaning of life. The church has a responsibility to engage the members to make sure spiritual growth occurs, being rooted and grounded in the word of God is encouraged and conforming to the image of Christ is emphasized, to enable members experience the ultimate meaning of life, which is living a victorious life while here on earth, spirit, soul and body, having a successful marriage and eventually making heaven for a peaceful eternal rest.

Assimilation, integration and the inability to secure a good job in a new culture affects marriages in the Nigerian community. A case in point is a couple that moved to America several years ago, both husband and wife were working, the wife is a nurse and the husband works other jobs. After some time the man did not find satisfaction in his job and decided to be going back and forth to Nigeria doing business selling used cars. The wife supported him morally and financially, to the point that they mortgaged their home and took out a line of credit so the husband could have enough money to do business. The husband went to Nigeria, married another woman and several years later decided to come back to America to divorce the wife. At this point the wife is struggling to care for her family as well as pay their mortgage and the line of credit. The house got foreclosed on because she could not meet their financial obligations. The week the husband decided to come and sign the final papers for their divorce, he was murdered in Nigeria. To the betrayed wife the issue of trust will be top priority in any relationship in

the future, assuming she gets over the disappointment of the first marriage. There are cases of husbands assisting their wives in the Nigerian community to attend higher institutions of learning, they advance to Master's degree and the women later decide the husbands are not educated enough for them and so they file for divorce. These issues emanate from breakdown of communication and lack of commitment to the marriage relationship. Couples who are walking in sanctification and conforming to the image of Christ will not be self-centered, they will not walk after the flesh but be Spirit led. Being rooted and grounded in the word of God, being a doer of the word and not just a hearer, not forsaking the fellowship of other believers, attending church regularly, participating in church programs and community work together as a couple helps fosters a healthy and successful marriage relationship. Communication, trust and commitment to one another is the backbone of any relationship.

Another factor that affects marriages in the Nigerian community is the culture that adheres to the traditional belief that the man is the bread winner of the family, since he is the head of the household. Men are looked upon as providers in the African community and they take pride in that; to provide for their homes, families and the very affluent will prefer the wife not to work. In the culture they find themselves, when there is a role reversal, there is a problem. This makes the man feels less than a man. The wife might be humble and do all that she needs to do but because of the cultural beliefs, there is bound to be conflict until the man gains employment or earns higher than the woman. Most of the time the husband sees any action of the wife as disrespectful. A case in point was a couple in one of our big cities who "trained" the wife to the level of being a medical Doctor, they began to have problems after her graduation, and the husband

allegedly killed the wife, claiming she was disrespectful to him, he spent his money training her to the level she was and now wants to do whatever she wants to do. It is tragic and situations like this plays itself out in the society, when people have not imbibed the foundational requirements for a successful marriage relationship, which is commitment, selflessness, love, unity, vision, friendship, emotional and spiritual responsiveness, forgiveness, maturation and being conformed to the image of Christ. Financial struggles affect marriages negatively as well. Hanging out with bad friends who will introduce negative habits derails a relationship. Many find themselves hanging in the balance when they have homes here in America and do not feel they belong in the society, and they have homes they have built back in Africa where they now feel excluded because they have been away from that environment for so long. So they travel back and forth trying to find a balance in their life.

The society and culture influence marriages either positively or negatively. Social Media has its benefits in that up-to-date information of what is happening in the environment and the world at large is easily available. At the same time, social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, has contributed to broken relationships and marriages. Unsolicited temptations are flashed in your face as you work on your computer reading your emails, pictures of semi-nude women come up, except you block the pop on. TV programs that portray immorality as acceptable has misled many innocent individuals to buy into the societal vices. People view having extra marital affairs as acceptable. Pornography and pornographic materials are easily accessible to individuals.

According to Scott Stanley, people have begun to shy away from marriage—not because they do not desire it or seek it, but because they fear that it is not really possible

to have a lasting, healthy, and satisfying marriage.¹ People have apathy towards the institution of marriage. In the society today and the culture in which we live cohabitations has become the norm. Individuals want to do a trial run, play house without commitment. Research has shown that men would treat women they are married to differently from those they cohabit with. With cohabitation, the issue is let's try this relationship and see if it will work, whereas in a marriage relationship there is commitment to one another.

Stanley opines that data are quite consistent and clear that people who are more religious tend to have slightly more stable and happy marriages. The closer you get to what people actually practice, the closer you get to much larger effects. In other words, couples who really practice their faith together, and who have faith that supports the special nature of marriage, are likely to be doing quite significantly better in their marriages.² It has been found that religious faith—and especially regular attendance at religious gatherings were significantly related to strength of marriages, contrary to the impressions given in the media about divorce rates in conservative groups being the same as in the unchurched. Christians are highly affected by the broader culture in what they think and how they behave.³ The dominant culture no longer has as broad of support for marital longevity, and Christians can only thrive and live a victorious marital life when they are conformed to the image of Christ. The need to be rooted and grounded in the word of God is paramount. Fellowshiping with other believers is key. Total surrender

¹ Scott Stanley, "Strengthening marriages in a skeptical culture: issues and opportunities." *Journal Of Psychology & Theology* 31, no. 3, (2003): 224-230, accessed January 22, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

² Ibid. 225.

³ Ibid. 225.

and accepting the gift of sanctification and walking in holiness is the antidote to the plague of divorce in the society today. The clergy is not exempt either.

Stanley asserts that we live in a culture that thrives on messages dominated by individual needs and concerns. As part of this, people no longer see their vow to their mate as part of a commitment to the community, but as more of the nature of an agreement between two consenting parties. The church emphasized two becoming one. It is no longer an individual effort but a collective team work that fosters unity, which has the power to trump break-downs in relationships caused by a focus on me vs. you.⁴ Stanley believes that in all kinds of relationships, negative patterns of thinking and interaction are predictive of divorce risk, they are also a prime factor in putting children at increased risk for all kinds of negative outcomes in life.⁵ Research has shown that children who grew up with both parents in the house turn out better in life than children of divorced parents or those raised in an environment where one parent is absent. Some children from single home parents that turned out right have been due to conscientious effort of that parent or their own hard work and determination to succeed in life.

What helps marriages in the long run is helping couples develop and maintain friendship, companionship, and vision, friendship, commitment, forgiveness, spiritual beliefs and practices, and expectation clarification. Some couples do not need help with skills. Some, even if they do, will respond more strongly to the information and suggestions about friendship or commitment. The ability to listen more and to

⁴ Scott Stanley, "Strengthening marriages in a skeptical culture: issues and opportunities." *Journal Of Psychology & Theology* 31, no. 3, (2003): 224-230. accessed January 22, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁵ Ibid. 227.

communicate feelings or desires is helpful in any relationship.⁶ Stanley therefore concludes that the element that impacted young married couples the most were messages related to commitment, investment in the relationship, and the preservation and protection of friendship. Malachi 2:15-16 is noted for the quote of God saying he hates divorce—not divorced people, by the way. In (NIV): [15] says “Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly off-spring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.” [16] ‘I hate divorce,’ says the Lord God of Israel, ‘and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,’ says the Lord Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. “The word “guard” here is the Hebrew word shamar. Shamar is the word for hedge.⁷ This knowledge combined with the clear research findings yields a deeper nuance to this passage that essentially calls us to put a hedge of protection around our commitment in marriage.⁸

According to Walter Schumm, “Couples should be connected with others who are walking with God through the Holy Spirit on a daily basis, for the sake of encouragement and sustenance beyond the confines of the church or counseling office. Focus on how each person might grow spiritually by allowing the Holy Spirit to direct their thoughts, plans, inter-actions, and responses to each other, with enthusiasm as opposed to any

⁶ Scott Stanley, "Strengthening marriages in a skeptical culture: issues and opportunities." *Journal Of Psychology & Theology* 31, no. 3, (2003): 224-230. accessed January 22, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁷ Ibid. 229.

⁸ Ibid. 229.

morbid sense of duty and how they would support each other in living out their relationship accordingly.”⁹

Schumm opines that happier spouses tend to attribute even better intentions than their partners may actually deserve while embittered spouses tend to attribute even worse intentions than their partners deserve. Positive affect tends to minimize negative affect¹⁰ (Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a latitude of sins. I Peter 4: 8 says “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” I John 4:18). He concludes that reducing the frequency and intensity of escalating cycles of negative affect will reduce the temptation to develop bitter, cold attitudes toward others. Conversely, failure to regulate negative affect will tend to foster more and more negativity (through escalations) and will tend to undercut motivation and a healthy relationship.¹¹

Emotional and spiritual responsiveness to your spouse fosters friendship in marriage which does not give room for escalating sequences of negativity, also known as negative reciprocity.¹² Romans 12: 17-21; Galatians 5: 15, 26; Philippians 4: 5—“Let your gentleness be known to all,” this no doubt includes the members of your own family!). This negative reciprocity tends to lead to withdrawal and ultimately, bitterness.¹³ (Colossians 3: 19; Hebrews 12: 15). Scripture seems to discuss this principle

⁹ Walter R. Schumm, "Comments on marriage in contemporary culture: five models that might help families." *Journal Of Psychology & Theology* 31, no. 3, (2003): 213-223, accessed January 21, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁰ Ibid. 220.

¹¹ Ibid. 220.

¹² Ibid. 219.

¹³ Ibid. 219.

in terms of not being easily provoked (Proverbs 14: 29; I Corinthians 13: 5) nor prone to provoke others to anger (Ephesians 6: 4), as well as avoiding evil, false words, etc.¹⁴

Wallace opines that marriage is actively good for you; it's not just an outmoded, useless, confining, abusive, bourgeois, patriarchal institution. He believes that no matter how you look, where you look, what you ask, or how carefully you control for confounding variables, married people are better off than people who are not married.¹⁵ In the cultural horizon, the ideal of rugged individualism, and the popular portrait of divorce as an act of courageous, costly, self-redemptive self-realization is not holding true as marriage is a publicly acknowledged social form. Research has shown that sustained commitment and mutual support, and compassionate commitment sustains a healthy relationship and marriage.¹⁶

I could not agree more with Wallace that linking newly marrieds into mentoring relationships with couples whose marriages have endured helps married couples. Existing statistics show that children of divorce have relatively higher rates of difficulty in getting married and in staying married themselves. He went further to say that through profiles of various adult children of divorce, the phenomenon is attributed to the absence of role models and, to a lesser extent, the disruption in the child's life caused by the parents' grief.

¹⁴ Walter R. Schumm, "Comments on marriage in contemporary culture: five models that might help families." *Journal Of Psychology & Theology* 31, no. 3, (2003): 213-223, accessed January 21, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁵ Catherine M. Wallace, "Reading at the intersection of culture and faith." *Anglican Theological Review* 83, no. 2 (March 1, 2001): 347, accessed January 22, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁶ Ibid. 349.

In conclusion for a marriage to survive in the culture and society that they find themselves, couples have to among other things, trust each other, be committed to the relationship, respect one another, be each other's friends, communication is vital, support and encourage each other financial and spiritually. They need to be involved in fellowship with other believers, be rooted and grounded in the word of God, be sanctified and conformed to the image of Christ. Being in an environment where they can be mentored by older couples is a plus to their relationship.

In the Redeemed church of God, the word of God is preached, Bible studies during the week, house fellowships in many communities, members are encouraged to fast and pray regularly. The church believes in the efficacy of prayer and many times members are encouraged to perform: 3 day fasts, 7 day fasts, 21 day fasts, 40 day fasts and recently 100 days fast for all the members of RCCG worldwide. The word is taught in Sunday school classes held every Sunday through the manual that the parent church makes available to all parishes worldwide and this helps the believer to be rooted and grounded so that he/she is not tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. According to Charles Kao, Psychologically, a man of identity goes out to meet every wind which blows, instead of being tossed to and fro by it, he is able to stand. But a man of identity diffusion or confusion is bound to be swept away by every wind, to say nothing about being tossed to and fro by it.¹⁷ Charles Kao suggests that the human self, responds according to its interpretations of what these ideas and ideals are in concrete situations. In the process of human growth, he continues, there are two operative principles, the principle of differentiation and the principle of integration. Man seeks to be wholesome

¹⁷ Charles C L. Kao, "Identity, faith, and maturity." *Journal Of Psychology & Theology* 3, no. 1 (December 1, 1975): 42-48, accessed May 5, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

by integrating ideals which may be in conflict with each other. He concludes that the mature Christian integrates his conflicting goals.¹⁸ The doctrines, holiness, resources, materials and the goal of the church to make heaven at all cost is what makes the church unique.

What then makes RCCG unique? The following doctrinal positions can be considered what makes the Redeemed Christian Church of God unique:-

1. It is a full gospel church, the total word of God is preached.
2. Holiness is number one priority of the Church without which no man shall see the Lord.
3. The issue of marriage is taken very seriously. The church does not allow anyone who is divorced to be a Pastor, they can serve in other areas, be a deacon, worker or whatever area of ministry they want to be used but they cannot be a Pastor of a church.
4. Evangelism is emphasized, a church or parish is to be established between a driving distances of every 10 minute.
5. The church empowers women to be all they can be in ministry. Women are ordained pastors, deaconesses. Commissioned ministers, and workers in the vineyard of the Lord.
6. The church's presence is not limited in every continent of the world, the headquarters is in Nigeria, and there are parishes in African, Asia, Europe, America, and the Middle East and in all countries all over the world.

¹⁸ Charles C L. Kao, "Identity, faith, and maturity." *Journal Of Psychology & Theology* 3, no. 1 (December 1, 1975): 42, accessed May 5, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

7. Pastors and missionaries are sent from Nigeria to nations all over the world to open Redeemed churches where there is a need.

What role do the women play in the church? The RCCG parent church has a Women in Ministry (WIM) program which is represented here in North America. Women are pillars, the cornerstone after the similitude of a palace in every congregation in general and in RCCG in particular. Women are involved in practically every department in the church, from pastoral care, to children's department, the Sunday school, prayer and intercessory department, the choir, users, greeters, media, etc. The National Women's Ministry was established with the intent to reach out, empower and edify women in RCCG and in the surrounding communities where the ministry exists; which will enable women to fulfil their destiny. This ministry is strategically positioned to be able to utilize and harness all talents, gifts and resources to build up women in the body of Christ.¹⁹ The vision and mission of RCCGNA Women in Ministry is to change the lives of women, hold an annual women's conference that brings together all the women in leadership, set yearly spiritual goals and participate in the RCCG National Convention. Provide prayer and counseling support, communication and information to the women.²⁰

Caroline Arrends believes that the mandate we have been given as humans is to pay attention to God. She believes that if we do not, we are guilty of sloth, no matter how hard we are working. In truth, she continues, there is an inverse relationship

¹⁹ "The Mission and Vision statement of the church," RCCGNA. The Church Mission, accessed April 15, 2014, <http://www.rccgna.org/TheChurch/Mission.aspx>.

²⁰ "Information about Women In Ministry of RCCGNA," RCCGNA About Us, accessed April 17, 2014, <http://wim.rccgna.org/AboutUs.aspx>.

between how overwhelmed we are doing things and how much energy we can give to being attentive.²¹ The busyness of women in particular and believers in general in having two jobs, attending school either on-line or on campus, soccer games for kids, recitals, basketball games and practices for their children leads to sloth and the inability to be receptive to the things that are spiritual. According to Arends, “part of the problem is that spiritual receptivity requires unglamorous practices like prayer, time in Scripture, and attentiveness to what God is doing in the people around me. Telling me, “Prayer promotes spiritual growth!” has as much wow-factor as announcing, “Reducing calories leads to weight loss!”²² Attending she opines takes time without offering quantifiable results. It requires stillness in a culture that rewards industriousness. It's inefficient in a world that considers getting things done next to godliness.²³ In 1 Samuel 13, we see king Saul out of his busyness and having little or no time to be still and seek the face of God or waiting for the prophet of God who has the responsibility to offer sacrifices to God to do his job, he went ahead and made the sacrifice because the Philistine army were about to invade his kingdom. The result was that he lost his kingdom to a man “after God’s own heart.” Saul lost his kingdom to David who knew what it was to have a personal relationship with God, who desired spiritual things and knew how to be still before his Maker. Arends opines that “there is no wisdom and no good outcome to organize the whole world yet be oblivious to the God who created it and holds it together. It is true that we have practical commitments we need to take seriously. But part of being

²¹ Carolyn Arends. "Hardworking sloths: how our busyness can disguise spiritual laziness." *Christianity Today* 55, no. 6 (June 1, 2011): 64, accessed May 23, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²² Ibid. 64.

²³ Ibid. 64.

responsible is being response-able: centering our lives in such a way that we can respond to the world around us with the mind of Christ. Such response-ability is impossible if our obligations crowd out any opportunity to get to know him better.²⁴

Many will attend church activities sometimes because of the psychological need to receive their friends and families approval, while others engage in spiritual ventures because they see the need to draw closer to God and to seek spiritual answers to their challenges outside of the regular work or organizational experience. Many find support in the community of believers which gives them a sense of belonging in the congregation to which they are affiliated. Soenens, Bart et al opines that “abundant correlational and experimental research has provided evidence for the differential effects of autonomy-supportive and controlling interpersonal styles on individuals' psychosocial functioning. Individuals who perceive others as autonomy supportive display high levels of psychological well-being, behavioral adjustment, and adaptive developmental outcomes.”²⁵ According to Soenens, Bart et al “one important instance of autonomous motivation is intrinsic motivation, which refers to the engagement in behavior for nothing but the feeling of satisfaction and joy associated with the behavior itself. Even when behavior is not intrinsically motivated, however, it can still be autonomous in nature.”²⁶ He went on to say that “when people realize the personal importance of a behavior that is

²⁴ Carolyn Arends. "Hardworking sloths: how our busyness can disguise spiritual laziness." *Christianity Today* 55, no. 6 (June 1, 2011): 64, accessed May 23, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²⁵ Soenens, Bart, et al. "How do perceptions of God as autonomy supportive or controlling relate to individuals' social-cognitive processing of religious contents? the role of motives for religious behavior." *International Journal For The Psychology Of Religion* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 10-30, accessed May 23, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²⁶ Ibid. 10.

not inherently satisfying and endorse this behavior as their own, they are said to identify with this behavior. Further, people may also integrate their behavior with deep-held values and preferences and thereby organize different personally valued behaviors into a harmonious whole. Together with intrinsic motivation, identification and integration are considered instances of autonomous motivation because they are characterized by feelings of choice and volition. In contrast, in the case of controlled motivation, people feel compelled, pressured, and forced to engage in a particular behavior.”²⁷ The purpose therefore for this project is not to use controlled motivation but to employ autonomous motivation, to enable the believer realize the benefits for the soul, spirit and body in engaging more in spiritual things in the church and community in which they live.

How does the church impact communal life one may ask? Evangelism groups go out regularly to hand out flyers and speak to people in the community to which members of the congregation are free to be a part of, if they find fulfillment or are convinced that is where their passion is. Mother’s day, bring a Friend’s day and Father’s day programs are opportunities for members to take flyers to invite their family, friends, neighbors and co-workers to the church. The church has a program in November where turkeys are purchased and given out to people who live around the church perimeter (neighbors). Members of the community who are not members of the Church are invited to the Annual BBQ and Cookout to which they are free to bring family and friends. Gift baskets are given out during the Christmas season. The church fully participates in feeding the homeless and the elderly in the community. Communal worship has major impact in the

²⁷ Soenens, Bart, et al. "How do perceptions of God as autonomy supportive or controlling relate to individuals' social-cognitive processing of religious contents? the role of motives for religious behavior." *International Journal For The Psychology Of Religion* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 10-30, accessed May 23, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

community as the church is a praying church, open to everyone and crime rate is low in the area. When women are engaged in any or some of these activities, they have the opportunity to experience what others are going through, bring their children into the community to interact with other children thereby reducing or eliminating stress and being overwhelmed by day to day activities. The need to pay attention to what God is doing in our lives and in the lives of others is more evident.

For assimilation to take place there has to be mentoring of believers. Older Christians need to mentor the younger ones and couples that have been married for some time and are experienced need to mentor the newly married couples. Time, energy, resources need to be spent and godly example has to be demonstrated by older believers as the young believers locate them in the congregation for help in their Christian walk. In 2 Timothy 2:1-26 we see Apostle Paul mentoring his protégé Timothy. In verse 1-7 we see Paul's encouragement for Timothy. He is to be a soldier, an athlete that does not disqualify himself but tenacious. He is to be a farmer, who sows the word of God. In verse 8-13 we see Paul's statements for Tim about Jesus being the son of David, his divinity and dependability; and in verse 15-22 his assignment for Timothy, he is encouraged to study to show himself approved, he is to study his speech and avoid foolishness and study his surroundings, flee from sin and ungodliness. Timothy at the end of the day is to commit what he has received from Paul to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. How then do we mentor? You cannot give what you don't have. 1. You need impartation from others. Develop and invest in people as Paul did with Timothy. 2. You need education. Entrust what you have received to somebody else and 3. Identification. But commit it to faithful

men and women who will be able to teach others. Mentoring can be likened to a relay race, you have a team of people who run their individual journeys to the best of their ability and passes the baton to the next person, they become a cheerleader for the next person, who takes the baton runs his leg and puts the baton in the hands of an anchor person who in turn passes it on to the next faithful person until the race is won.

Mentoring will help keep many young believers in church and lead to spiritual growth.

Mentoring helps keep youth in school.

Research shows that:

Mentors help keep students in school. Students who meet regularly with their mentors are 52% less likely than their peers to skip a day of school and 37% less likely to skip a class (Public/Private Ventures study of Big Brothers Big Sisters). Mentors help with homework and can improve their mentees' academic skills. They help improve a young person's self-esteem. Youth who meet regularly with their mentors are 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs and 27% likely to start drinking (Public/Private Ventures study of Big Brothers Big Sisters). About 40% of a teenager's waking hours are spent without companionship or supervision. Mentors provide teens with a valuable place to spend free time. Mentors teach young people how to relate well to all kinds of people and help them strengthen communication skills.²⁸

Just as young people need mentors to be successful in school and in life, young Christians and every believer needs a mentor to succeed in their Christian walk.

Mentoring simply says we care. It needs your commitment and sacrifice of time, resources, wealth of experience and patience to pour out into the life of another to help bring the individual to that level of maturity in Christ. Many struggle in their Christian walk because of so many things going on around them and in the society.

Many women wear multiple hats as mothers, business owners, students, wives, sisters, and are career driven and all this leads to a busy life that distracts us from higher

²⁸ "Value of Mentoring, About Mentoring," Mentoring, accessed May 25, 2014, http://www.mentoring.org/about_mentor/value_of_mentoring/.

order thinking and my project sheds light on the process and the argument is that allowance for spiritual growth, maturing into the image of Christ and having the mind of Christ will be more beneficial to the believer. Women need mentors also. Women need someone to turn to for guidance and reassurance every now and then. At the end of my teaching and training on sanctification, the women are having a balance in their lives, growing spiritually, having the mind of Christ, conforming to the image of Christ and becoming more fulfilled individuals living healthier and happier lives.

The writer has enumerated the psychological challenges and social economic aspects of life that women in the Redeemed Christian Church of God are likely to encounter. Many congregations have the need to balance life, family and career as well as grow spiritually in the things of God and the writer's context was no exception. Focus on newly married women in the group was essential as they grew in sanctification that enhanced their walk in holiness every day to help in attaining maturity and growth in the things of God. It has been enumerated in this paper that challenges faced by women can be overcome through involvement in the community and being rooted and grounded in the word of God which leads to maturation thereby enabling the individual to be able to integrate and balance work, family, ministry, business, school, and live a happy fulfilled life. In the implementation of the six week program, the researcher analyzed the pre-test questions, post-test surveys, interviews and corresponding charts.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

From the beginning the objective of this project was to create a model to learn and be rooted in the word of God and sanctification through personal application. The focus was on women in general and particularly on the young married Nigerian women growing in Sanctification. The hypothesis was that learning about the Word of God and sanctification would lead to the women being more receptive, more aware of who they are in Christ, walking in the spirit, better communication skills in their marriage relationships, more engaged in communal fellowship and conformed to the image of Christ thereby maturation spiritually, having the mind of Christ and living a more victorious Christian life. This was attained through a six week teaching of the following topics (1) The Call (2) What is Sanctification (3) How to receive Sanctification (4) Culture in Marriage (5) Who we are in Christ and our Inheritance (6) Testify, Mentor and Evangelize. Eight women participated in the project.

The methodology employed was phenomenology approach to qualitative research design, using training, teaching, questionnaires and interviews to measure the effects through pre-test and post-test on each participant. This study engaged procedures of the phenomenological methodology as its central research strategy. Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry that combines philosophy and psychology in which the

researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants.¹ According to Heimbrock, “Phenomenology offers key concepts and research strategies for research on “living religion” beyond conventional social and theoretical limits of religious research. To use phenomenological methods within empirical theology invites theological reflection on essential notions, principles and assumptions that are at stake in empirical sciences, such as reality, praxis, action, objectivity, validity, and life. This leads to a new and enlarged model for interpreting faith.”² Heimbrock opines that Methodology is inquiry that addresses the question of why to do research in one way and not another way. It relates to the meta-niveau, theoretical reflection about choices for methods within the framework of a scientific discipline.³ He went further to say that Methodology is the inquiry that explains research interests, the relation of methods with research objects, the meaning of basic concepts, and the implicit norms and expectations of a research design.⁴ Rosalynn Adossi is the President of the Women in the church and works with the group of women on a regular basis connecting at meetings, social functions for the women, like Bridal showers, Baby dedications, Weddings, Birthdays, Prayer meetings etc. She is fully involved and in relationship with individuals in the group. This position enables the researcher an avenue through which data is being collected. The researcher engages in worship experience

¹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014).

² Hans-Gunter Heimbrock, "From data to theory: elements of methodology in empirical phenomenological research in practical theology." *International Journal Of Practical Theology* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2005): 273-299, accessed March 2, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

³ Ibid. 275.

⁴ Ibid. 275.

with the group, exposition of the word, receive testimonies as to what revelation, insight and impact messages shared at meetings have made in their lives.

Heimbrock opines that some have argued about the usefulness of phenomenology to make a substantial contribution to empirical theology. The critics have raised a twofold critique, from the empirical and theological sides. Some argue that phenomenology, since Husserl, is of little theological value due to its neutrality towards normative approaches to reality. The argument is that phenomenology is not capable of expressing or interpreting the essence of faith as grounded in revelation, but rather deals with faith reductively, taking it only as a matter of human consciousness.⁵ Others express suspicion from the perspective of the modern social sciences, arguing that phenomenological approaches to reality do not follow the postulates and rationales of hard empirical sciences. Therefore, phenomenology is suspected of ignoring or even contradicting common rules and standards of empirical research, such as objectivity and generalization, because it is not interested in formulating and testing exact hypotheses about distinct objects. These latter critics mistrust the conclusions of phenomenological research because the results cannot be proven in a process of falsification and the emphasis is placed instead on dubious subject-centered epistemology.⁶ I could not disagree more with the critics on the theological and empirical contributions of phenomenological research because it can be measured as data is collected.

⁵ Hans-Gunter Heimbrock, "From data to theory: elements of methodology in empirical phenomenological research in practical theology." *International Journal Of Practical Theology* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2005): 273-299, accessed March 2, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁶ Ibid. 277.

The problem addressed in my context was that women were not walking in holiness in every area of their lives. Living a victorious Christian life was therefore a daily struggle. The purpose of the phenomenological approach was to preach the word of God with power because it is the word of God that brings deliverance, salvation, healing and transformation. Took the group of women in the church through the process of maturation so they could become conformed to the image of Christ. Taught women to have faith in God, showed the promises of God in his word and declared that it is possible to live a holy life. Taught on how to walk in holiness in their marriage to overcome cultural challenges they face in the society in which they live and helped them to be rooted and grounded in the doctrine of the Bible and to walk in the Spirit. Living a matured life in Christ helps you live a victorious life. The objective of the study was that learning about the Word of God and sanctification would lead to the women being more receptive, more aware of who they are in Christ, walking in the spirit, better communication skills in their marriage relationships, more engaged in communal fellowship, maturation spiritually, and having the mind of Christ.

The methodology employed was qualitative approach to action research, it used the phenomenological approach because it allowed for training, teaching, questionnaires, interviews, pre-tests and post-tests for data collection and assessments of participants. Measurement tools also included pre-test and post-test surveys to evaluate the current state of mind, belief and the depth of understanding of the participants.

The research sought to discover where the women were spiritually and how to grow in the grace and word of God as the researcher prepared messages and teachings from the word of God relating to what the call is, what is sanctification, how to receive

the gift, and exercise it on a day to day basis, who we are in Christ, how to have the mind of Christ; mentor young believers; also examined were cultural challenges affecting young married women, walking in holiness and teachings on how to be conformed to the image of Christ. The following research questions were posed as the pre-test and post-test questions to all the participants:

1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?
2. Have you received the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues? Yes or No. If No, why not?
3. Do you hunger more for the things of God or things of the world
4. Are you resentful, keep malice and vengeful or forgiving when offended
5. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?
6. Do you attend the Women's Meetings regularly? If No, why not?
7. What would make you to be more committed and involved with the group?
8. Do you have a passion for souls/mentor young believers – Great commission
9. What expectations do you have of the Women's Ministry?
10. What is your life like?
11. What takes up your time?
12. What are your stressors?
13. How do you struggle with cultural differences?
14. Is there someone in Church you would like to emulate?
15. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?
16. Do you pray together with your spouse?

17. Have you received the gift of Sanctification? If No, why not?

There was weekly meetings with the context associates over a period of six weeks of lessons, teaching and preaching. Periodic conference by telephone was held as well with the context associates. Finally, data collected after the six weeks of training and teaching was evaluated to ascertain the effectiveness of the project on the individual participants and follow up work like final interviews and surveys. The hypothesis of this project was that the women of RCCG House on the Rock would be rooted and grounded in the word and sanctification, the word of God was preached with power through expository preaching and teaching. Teachings on having the mind of Christ and conforming to the image of Christ, walking in sanctification in all areas of life including their marriage relationship. This model can be duplicated in a male fellowship and in fact the whole congregation of a church, it is not and should not be limited to women alone. Believers were mentored and encouraged to be fully involved in discipleship, bible study and fellowship with other believers, evangelism leading to Church growth, personal relationship with God and knowing the word for themselves.

Phenomenological approach shaped my process through the application of what Heimbrock calls life world. Life world is “the world in which we are always already living and which furnishes the ground for all cognitive performance and all scientific determination.”⁷ Reflecting on one’s life world means stepping back from the self-evident and basic givens of life. To think of the life world subjectively is not, however, to

⁷ Hans-Gunter Heimbrock, "From data to theory: elements of methodology in empirical phenomenological research in practical theology." *International Journal Of Practical Theology* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2005): 273-299, accessed March 2, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

circumvent the context, for it is one's horizon or a form of life praxis.⁸ Neither does life approach restrict thinking in a narrow, circumspect way. Rather, reflecting on life world stimulates further knowledge by encouraging people to reflect on the blind spots of their perceptions. In a sense, life world may be the object of theoretical criticism, or a source to critique the sciences and scientific methods when they ignore or become imperialistic toward life.⁹ According to Hans-Gunter, the phenomenological perspective of life world enlarges the theoretical perspective of empirical theology. He notes that it encourages the discovery of new phenomena, and it also broadens the formal concept of religion with its orientation towards living religion.¹⁰ Reflections from a life world approach enable empirical theological re-search not only to deal with distinct and predefined religious matters, but also to begin and end with a broader perspective on life, connected to everyday culture.¹¹

According to Heimbrock, one critical element of phenomenological research is perception. Phenomenological research praxis will not start with a sterile sifting of data, nor will it start by judging perceptive elements at once; it first enters praxis with an open awareness. It will activate unspecific perceptions, using an "ignorant eye."¹² The researcher thus starts by seeing and listening to the scenery in a mall, by smelling and touching at a central station, or by sitting in silence in the area around an altar or in front

⁸ Hans-Gunter Heimbrock, "From data to theory: elements of methodology in empirical phenomenological research in practical theology." *International Journal Of Practical Theology* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2005): 273-299, accessed March 2, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁹ Ibid. 285.

¹⁰ Ibid. 287.

¹¹ Ibid. 287.

¹² Ibid. 294.

of a church building. Such a perceptual experience awakens the researcher's awareness of, and resonates with, a specific atmosphere within a particular situation.¹³ Heinbrock goes on to say that communicating with people in the field and perceiving their commentaries as well as their behavior, researchers also need to perceive their hesitations and the open places and omitted steps in informants' comments and behavior¹⁴. I do agree with him because in a church environment such as this individual information and privacy has to be protected except where they opt to share openly with others their testimonies or life experiences.

A second element in phenomenological research is the field. Proceeding with research in a life world perspective asks one to enter a situation in everyday life or a field which could be of dreams or imagination.¹⁵ In this field, the scenery has spatial as well as temporal structure. A field is an unknown and unstructured terrain, which a researcher enters bodily and mentally, and engages with involved participation. The researcher may even meet known or unknown images, visions, and occurrences during the course of research.¹⁶

A third characteristic of phenomenological methods is self-reflection. The phenomenological emphasis is on subjectivity - the involvement of subjects in their own

¹³ Hans-Gunter Heimbrock, "From data to theory: elements of methodology in empirical phenomenological research in practical theology." *International Journal Of Practical Theology* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2005): 273-299, accessed March 2, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁴ Ibid. 295.

¹⁵ Ibid. 295.

¹⁶ Ibid. 295.

life worlds and in the fields that they are studying.¹⁷ Heimbrock notes this involvement is not only relevant for methodology and theology, but it also has a crucial impact on the research process itself. When researchers assume subjectivity, he opines they recognize their need to engage in a research praxis that perceives their research field as a distinct object and reflects on their own involvement and influence in the field as mind-body subjects.¹⁸

A fourth characteristic is interpretation. Despite the ideal of a phenomenological habit “to see naively and freshly again,” the overall purpose of scientific empirical research asks for putting this fresh look into a larger frame of reference.¹⁹ It is necessary to deal deliberately with the results of these self-perceptions, and it is necessary to include also theoretical arguments that are not part of actual perceptions in the research field. The challenge of phenomenological research is not, however, to extinguish or overcome the body-perceptions and preconscious elements of the researchers’ first encounters with research objects by interpreting them.²⁰

Hans-Gunter concludes that Phenomenologists, as well as ethnographers, hold that discovering reality in cultural theory is not refining data in the sense of mere reproductions. Both approaches to research include a constructive element within the scientific, hermeneutic activity, thus they reveal something that is not simply “a matter of

¹⁷ Hans-Gunter Heimbrock, "From data to theory: elements of methodology in empirical phenomenological research in practical theology." *International Journal Of Practical Theology* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2005): 296, accessed March 2, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

¹⁸ Ibid. 295.

¹⁹ Ibid. 296.

²⁰ Ibid. 296.

fact.” Participant observation and ethnographic description, although related to given realities, have a creative and imaginative component.²¹

Ethical Considerations

In all fields of research and profession, the importance of ethical considerations is stressed. The doctors have to operate within the ethics of their profession, so do psychologists, lawyers, writers, engineers, bankers, nurses, etc. Ethics in any field of research or profession are the tools that govern behavior and methods. The researcher has to be cognizant of the need to adhere to the valid consent consisting of the following components:

1. According to Creswell, the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the informants/participants.²²
2. Research participants must be informed about the purpose of the project, Methods used, what is expected of them, their risks, if any and duration.
3. The research has to be truthful, participants are to have the freedom to participate of their own free will and to discontinue if they choose to.
4. The issue of privacy of personal information shared during the research must be clear to participants, on how data will be used.

²¹ Hans-Gunter Heimbrock, "From data to theory: elements of methodology in empirical phenomenological research in practical theology." *International Journal Of Practical Theology* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2005): 296, accessed March 2, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

²² John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th Ed., (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014).

5. Participants will be informed of all data collection devices and activities.²³
6. Verbatim transcriptions and written interpretations and reports will be made available to the informant.²⁴
7. The final decision regarding informant anonymity will rest with the informant.²⁵

The participants in this phenomenological study were assured of the integrity of this research by adhering to the components enumerated above. The participants had a clear understanding of what the project was all about and how it affected them and the expectation of the researcher.

There were six week teaching and preaching classes where different topics were addressed through Biblical interpretations and cultural and personal experiences.

The individuals who had agreed to participate received information concerning the project and a schedule of days, time and venue where the classes were held. They were assured of their privacy and freedom to withdraw from the project if they were unable or unwilling to continue. The classes were held in the Youth Room of the Church, where there was privacy as no other class or activity was going on at the same time. The role of the researcher has been valuable in employing behavioral psychology in which the researcher examined the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants; in their own personal experiences and buttressing that with the fact of the word of God as it relates to them.

²³ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th Ed., (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2014), 209.

²⁴ Ibid. 96.

²⁵ Ibid. 99.

Triangulation of the Data

In quantitative research, triangulation of data is a strategy employed in order to ensure internal validity. Triangulation is the process whereby data is collected through multiple sources to include interviews, observations and document analysis.²⁶ According to Bryman, Triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings.²⁷ He goes on to say that since much social research is founded on the use of a single research method and as such may suffer from limitations associated with that method or from the specific application of it, triangulation offers the prospect of enhanced confidence.²⁸ Triangulation, he notes, is one of the several rationales for MULTIMETHOD RESEARCH. The term derives from surveying, where it refers to the use of a series of triangles to map out an area.²⁹ Bryman states that the idea of triangulation is very much associated with measurement practices in social and behavioral research.

There are different types of triangulation methods in research. Bryman notes that, Denzin (1970) extended the idea of triangulation beyond its conventional association with research methods and designs. He distinguished these forms of triangulation:

1. Data triangulation, which entails gathering data through several sampling strategies, so that slices of data at different

²⁶ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th Ed., (Sage Publication, Thousand Oaks, CA. 2014), 210.

²⁷ Alan Bryman Professor of Social Research Department of Social Sciences Loughborough University Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU United Kingdom 44.

²⁸ Ibid. 44.

²⁹ Ibid. 44.

times and social situations, as well as on a variety of people, are gathered.

2. Investigator triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one researcher in the field to gather and interpret data.

3. Theoretical triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one theoretical position in interpreting data. Bringing together people from different disciplines.

4. Methodological triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one method for gathering data.³⁰ Example is results from focus groups, interviews or surveys.

5. Environmental triangulation, refers to the use of different locations, settings and other key factors like time, day or season in which the study took place and why. Validity has been established if these factors are changed and the findings remain the same.

This study used both methodological triangulation, and environmental triangulation. Methodological triangulation used surveys and interviews with the participants. The use of pre-test and post-test questions of surveys was employed. The participants had face-to-face interview with the researcher. Environmental triangulation fits the team of Context Associates in this project as it is easier for them to meet for the study in the church environment. Location and time is of great importance because of their busyness and work schedules. The classes were held immediately after the church service on a Sunday which does not require them to come out another night of the week.

³⁰ N. K. Denzin, *The Research Act in Sociology*. (Chicago IL: Aldine, 1970).

This worked out very well with the participants. Saturdays during our general meetings was also utilized as a time to meet so their busy schedules can be accommodated. The use of the church also provided privacy and confidentiality for the participants. The multiple methods used in this research project are surveys, interviews, teachings and preaching to the group of participants in the confines of the church environment. If the conclusions from each method used are similar, then validity is ensured. Bryman asserts that a combination of triangulation methods makes it a device for enhancing the credibility and persuasiveness of a research account.³¹

The Context Associate Pre-test and Post-test Surveys: Figure 1 was utilized to assess the mind set and experiences of 8 Context Associates. These individuals have been told what the project is about and given a synopsis of the thesis. This is a selected group of women from the Redeemed Christian Church of God, House on the Rock, Grand Prairie, TX. These women are between the ages of thirty to sixty. The Surveys were developed for the collection of data from the participants. The context associates have contributed their opinions to the project. The pre-test and post-test are the same open-ended questions posed to the participants before the teachings and expositions of the word began and after the six weeks teachings. The purpose of the questions was to gather data about their views, mind set and experiences of the phenomena being addressed in the teachings. To ascertain where they were (in terms of understanding and experience) before the teachings of the subject and where they are after the teaching (to measure their understanding, transformation and impact the teaching might have had on each individual).

³¹ Alan Bryman, Professor of Social Research Department of Social Sciences Loughborough University Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU United Kingdom 44.

Feedback from Context Associates: The post-test questions pose as the feedback from the participants. It chronicles the measurement of the impact the teachings have had on them and also what knowledge and information they have received. It also showcases the effect of the preaching and teaching on their experiences prior to exposure to the class. Free flowing and conversational interviews were conducted with the participants.

Field notes: The researcher prepared notes from the word of God to buttress the teachings and also used personal experiences and experiences of others to explain each topic that was taught in each class.

According to Guba and Lincoln there are four criteria for judging the validity of qualitative research. These are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.³² The credibility criteria requires that my context read my result of the research and agree to make it credible. The participants are the ones to judge the credibility of the research. The feedback of the context associates was incorporated in this project. The transferability criteria requires that the quantitative research can be transferred or generalized to other contexts like men, for example and is not limited to just the women group. The dependability criteria requires that there be changes in recording two different things, that is if we observe the same group of women twice, there should be changes in the results. Ability to repeat a study. This makes for dependability. An example is signing your name twice, you can never sign the same way, there will be a slight change but the way you write still remains the same. The conformability criteria is what I wrote in my Chapter 6. This is the process I have employed to collect, analyze and compare data from multiple sources.

³² Y.S. Lincoln and E.G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. 1985). 300.

Data Collection

The first data collection source are the pre-test surveys of the eight context associate for this project. The researcher is the President and leader of the women of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, House on the Rock parish, in Grand Prairie, TX. The women in the church are the context associates and they are the first source of data collection. The project was introduced to them, each one received documentation of what the project is about and what the goal was. Surveys were given out as pre-test questions to find out where they were spiritually, their mind set, experiences and challenges they might have in their spiritual walk or marital life. As mentioned above these women are members of the women's group of which the researcher is the Leader. The researcher meets with the women regularly and interacts with them. She is typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with the participants as this introduces a range of strategic, ethical, and personal issues into the qualitative research process.³³ Contact is made regularly at Wednesday Bible study, Sunday worship service, naming ceremonies, birthdays, weddings, or any activity going on in the church. The researcher communicates with the women through texting, on the phone and email regularly. The researcher met with eight of the women for a free flowing and conversational face to face interview. The interviews took place in the church environment that provides confidentiality and privacy for the participants and also to accommodate their busy schedules. There was no need for consent forms to be filled as they were not being taped. Each participant was asked the same pre-test questions.

³³ L. F. Locke, W. W. Spirduso, and S. J. Silverman, *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals 6th Ed.*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003).

The second data collection source also came from the eight context associates in the form of survey post-test questions. They are the same questions as the pre-test but with a little variation. The variation came as a result of the experience they had after the six weeks of classes to teach and preach the phenomena of Sanctification (Conforming to the image of Christ). According to Clark Moustakas: "Through phenomenology a significant methodology is developed for investigating human experience and for deriving knowledge... One learns to see naively and freshly again, the word "phenomenology" dates back to eighteenth century philosophy. For a long time, a rather Platonist meaning of the concept was popular. Phenomena were understood to be "things as they appear to the human senses," rather than "things as they are in themselves."

According to Heimbrock, Edmund Husserl's critical call, "Back to the things them-selves!" is well known. This was Husserl's alternative to dealing with artificial objects of the human mind. This inherited posture of phenomenology is still little understood as regards the elementary and crucial question, "What are data?" The literal translation of the Latin word datum is "that which is given." The heart of phenomenological epistemology is reflecting on how to get knowledge from data, consistent with the very basic and essential idea of Husserl's philosophy about data. In his rather essentialist language, Husserl describes this with the word "given-ness". According to him, gaining knowledge about reality starts always with what is given. This can be called an experiential start because his point of departure is an experience that is given to a human being.³⁴

³⁴ Hans-Gunter Heimbrock, "From data to theory: elements of methodology in empirical phenomenological research in practical theology." *International Journal Of Practical Theology* 9, no. 2 (January 1, 2005): 273-299, accessed March 2, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

Field notes are the third triangulation source for this project. The researcher prepared teachings and messages that explained and had facts from the word of God and experiences of individuals and personal experiences regarding the topic. The participants were taken through a six weeks class of training and teaching topics that explained the phenomena. Topics for the six weeks included: (1) The call. In this class the foundational scriptures in Jeremiah 1:1-10 was laid. (2) What is Sanctification (Conforming to the image of Christ). We looked closely at the foundational scripture in Colossians 1:15-23. (3) How to receive Sanctification. (4) Culture in Marriage. (5) Who we are in Christ and our inheritance. (6) Testify, Mentor and Evangelize. These teachings are Figures 1-6. The feedback from the participants were encouraged and immediate in all the classes, expressed with nodding in agreement to a full blown discussion and contribution time during the Culture in marriage class. The participants contributed and provided some historical information about the church. Many of them have been in the church organization (RCCG) for long and have in-depth knowledge that has proven advantageous to the research project.

The Phenomenological Theory

Throughout the history of the psychology of religion the empirical and the phenomenological orientations have persistently competed with each other.³⁵ In the beginning years (1880-1895) there were both a latent phenomenology represented by

³⁵ Jack T. Hanford, "Synoptic approach: resolving problems in empirical and phenomenological approaches to the psychology of religion." *Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion* 14, no. 3 (September 1, 1975): 219-227, accessed March 24, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

William James (1842-1910) which emphasized that religion be understood from the standpoint of the religious person and an aspiring empiricism represented by G. Stanley Hall (1884-1924) and his school which, by contrast, emphasized objective observation.³⁶ Later, both sources helped to establish psychology of religion as an important area of study during the years 1895-1920. During the 1920's empiricism was narrowly conceived by the regnant behaviorists.³⁷ This influence shaped psychology in general and spread to the psychology of religion. A result was an eclipse of the psychology of religion from 1930 to 1945.³⁸ Phenomenological theory has had a confusing history; ordinarily it is used to indicate present direct experience just as it occurs. The late R. B. Macleod, a phenomenological psychologist of Cornell University, averred that phenomenological refers to present direct experience and empirical refers to the accumulation of past experience.³⁹ I could not agree more with Macleod.

According to Hanford, John Locke, the British empiricist who decisively influenced the direction of American psychology, characterized the empirical tradition by the claim that ideas must be capable of being reduced to sensory data. Knowledge comes to the mind, which initially is like a blank slate, through sensations. There is no direct access to knowledge and it is obtained only through observation.⁴⁰ In contrast to Locke's empirical orientation, Hanford argues that the phenomenological tradition is

³⁶ Jack T. Hanford, "Synoptic approach: resolving problems in empirical and phenomenological approaches to the psychology of religion." *Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion* 14, no. 3 (September 1, 1975): 219-227, accessed March 24, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

³⁷ Ibid. 220.

³⁸ Ibid. 220.

³⁹ Ibid. 220.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 220.

characterized by the claims that ideas cannot be reduced to sensory experience, that the mind is not passive but active and capable of creating ideas, and that direct access to knowledge especially of and by persons is possible.⁴¹ I could not agree more with Hanford. On the basis of these philosophical characteristics, the phenomenological, internal approach is distinguished initially from the empirical, external orientation.⁴² Since phenomenologists assume from their experience and from others that the self; determines behavior, they study religious behavior from the perception of the religious person. Such an emphasis upon understanding religion from inside the self also means that the phenomenologist must participate in the process of description of experience by means of an encounter with the phenomena and the religious person.⁴³ The researcher could not agree more with Hanford in this regard, for she has experienced the gift of sanctification herself, and so is able to share her first-hand experience with the participants. Hanford asserts that not only do phenomenologists study religious behavior from the personal perceptions of the religious person, but also their approach allows the subject matter to reveal itself. The phenomenologist then observes or perceives the revelation or manifestation and attempts to receive its meaning.⁴⁴ In this process, Hanford continues, the observer assumes that his participation is appropriate because religious

⁴¹ Jack T. Hanford, "Synoptic approach: resolving problems in empirical and phenomenological approaches to the psychology of religion." *Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion* 14, no. 3 (September 1, 1975): 219-227, accessed March 24, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁴² Ibid. 220.

⁴³ Ibid. 220.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 221.

knowledge is by nature personal knowledge.⁴⁵ Moreover, Hanford states, phenomenologists are aware of being affectively related to data. Since the perceiver is inextricably related to the perceived, the affective relation requires empathy. Empathy involves a disciplined relationship of feeling and of identity, just as the mystic feels at one with himself and with the object of his meditation.⁴⁶

Project Coding

Creswell defines coding as the process of organizing data by bracket (in text or image segments) using words representing a category in the margin.⁴⁷ These texts or pictures collected are labelled into terms. In the coding process the researcher is able to get a sense of the whole through carefully reading through the transcripts generated from the interview with the participants. Coding allows the researcher the opportunity to scrutinize the data, separate topics into major, recurrent or unique in separate columns. Coding gives the researcher the ability to arrange or group topics that relate to each other or answers to pre-test or post-test survey questions that are similar. The goal of coding is to analyze, interpret and draw conclusions from data collected for any research. The researcher in this project has analyzed the data by themes and patterns as the material collected from the participants were developed and condensed. The researcher was

⁴⁵ Jack T. Hanford, "Synoptic approach: resolving problems in empirical and phenomenological approaches to the psychology of religion." *Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion* 14, no. 3 (September 1, 1975): 219-227, accessed March 24, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 221.

⁴⁷ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th Ed., (Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE Publications, 2014). 197.

able to collate, interpret and measure the spiritual effectiveness of the material that the participants had been taught in the six weeks of teaching and exposition of the word of God on the topic for this project. The following Figures 1-6 are the notes from the six weeks of teaching the participants received.

Figure 1 – Week One Teaching Notes

Title: **The Call**

Text: **Jeremiah 1:1-10, Colossians 1:15-25**

We have been called out of darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel of Christ. Just like Jeremiah, Moses, Gideon and many men and women of God were called in time of old. Many of us like the prophets resisted the call of God for a long time until we eventually surrendered our lives to Christ and asked him to come into our life and save our soul. Salvation is the first work of grace and it is a gift from God. In Colossians Christ is revealed as sovereign. Sanctification is a second work of grace and it is free also. We are to walk in holiness. We are going to be looking deep into what this gift is, the benefits and so much more in subsequent classes.

This year has been declared a year of grace and glory by our father in the Lord. Looking at the text in Psalm 84:11; which is our text for the year, we find that there is a condition. “It says For Jehovah God is a sun and a shield: Jehovah will give grace and glory; no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly. In order for us to experience the fullness of God’s grace and glory we will have to walk uprightly”. NIV say “Blameless”. Take note of the word walk in that text. In Gen 17:1 When Abraham was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him and said “I am Almighty God, walk before Me and be blameless”. When we live before God, it is a movement toward holiness. It is a lifestyle that affects every area of our lives. Walking is a metaphor used throughout the Bible, especially in Genesis. In Genesis 3:8 the word walk describes the Lord God in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 5:21-24 Enoch walked with God. In Genesis 6:9 Noah was

described as a just man, perfect in his generation, who walked with God. A walk is not static, it is a movement. God is asking Abraham to walk before his presence with nothing to hide. Is it possible for Christians to try to hide from God? What do we mean by blameless?

The Hebrew word is “tamin” and is used of Noah in Genesis 6:9. The root meaning is whole, integrated, as all of our energy is pursuing one thing. Abraham was to be dedicated to one cause and not free to live like the Canaanites around him or half-hearted in his service to God. The same I believe God is asking of us today. James 1:4 says “to be perfect and complete”. The call is for whole-heartedness, our aim is to please God. We do this by walking before him with nothing to hide. The opposite of which is being double-minded. The Bible says a double minded man will receive nothing from God.

In conclusion, we have all been called by God at one time or the order to serve him and also to take the message of salvation (the good news) to others. We are required to walk whole heartedly before God as we have answered the call and go deeper for the things of God. We are not to remain at the level of the call, at the level of salvation. We have to desire to walk blameless before the Almighty God. We have to desire to be rooted and grounded in the word of God. We have to be sanctified.

Figure 2 – Week Two Teaching Notes

Title: What is Sanctification?

Text: I Thessalonians 5:23, I Peter 1:15, Phil 2:12b-13, Roman

12:1-2, Matt 22:37-40, Gal 5:22-26

What is the meaning of Sanctification? Sanctification is the act of God's grace whereby we are set apart and made holy. It is the second work of grace where God takes our stony heart and gives us a heart of flesh/compassion. It is subsequent to justification. It is the grace of God given to us to forgive our fellowman when they sin against us and quick to repent when we sin against God and always willing to do the will of God. Sanctification helps us to be broken before God. Christ becomes enthroned in our lives; our flesh is no longer on the throne. We die daily and subject our body, feelings and emotions under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We have a responsibility to lay our lives down at the Altar daily to maintain that heart of flesh and a sanctified life as long as we remain in this world.

When we believe we can never be good enough for God, we fall into despair but if we accept the finished work on Calvary, we are able to receive the gift of sanctification (Jesus died outside the gates for our sanctification) Hebrews 13:12 says "Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate". When believers are fully surrendered to God they can walk perfectly before him and be blameless like Abraham did. By the sacrifice of Christ on the cross the community of believers is sanctified as we read in Ephesians 5:26-27 "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a

glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Barrick believes that “Sanctification is inseparable from regeneration; where there is one, the other must also exist. Sanctification is the process of making holy, whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament. God's holiness is complete, comparable to no one else, and is incompatible with sin. Man's holiness is progressive as it seeks to match the holiness of God in dedicating everything to Him. Both Testaments multiply references to God's holiness as the foundation for human holiness. The believer progresses in his own sanctification through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and through attention to the Scripture, but humans also have a role in sanctification. They must live out what they possess by the grace of God.”⁴⁸

In conclusion, after we have received the call of salvation, we are required to seek the gift of Sanctification, which is the second work of grace. We are to lay our lives down at the Altar as a sacrifice to God. It is the Altar that sanctifies the gift. In order to live a victorious Christian life we have to receive the sanctification that is ours through the blood of Jesus Christ. We have to walk circumspectly before God daily and walk out our sanctification with fear and trembling. We have a responsibility to walk out our sanctification daily because as long as we are still on earth in this flesh suit, temptations, trials and tribulations will come our way. We have to desire and know how to receive the gift of sanctification.

⁴⁸ David L. Cubie, "Entire" sanctification, the platonic doctrine of the soul, and First Thessalonians 5:23." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 45, no. 2 (September 1, 2010): 136-160, accessed March 7, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

Figure 3 – Week Three Teaching Notes

Title: **How to receive Sanctification**

Text: **Ephesians 4:13-14, 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1**

God promised to receive the offering of those who separate themselves from all evil through entire consecration.

According to Yong Amos “Human beings participate in Gods sanctifying work—this is the traditional Wesleyan doctrine of salvation that emphasizes synergistic cooperation with the divine initiatives—so that, while it is God who purifies imperfect creatures, the latter have some responsibility in the process. As St. Paul admonished the Philippian Christians: “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12b-13). Yong further asserts that “the means of sanctifying grace include the classical disciplines of scripture reading, prayer, and the sacraments within the fullness of ecclesial life”.⁴⁹

Theologian Phoebe Palmer was brought up as a Methodist. Phoebe experienced sanctification when she surrendered to God. She had 6 kids, lost 3 and felt she loves them more than God. This led her to decide to dedicate her life to obey God. White opines that Phoebe Palmer was born in New York in 1807 and died there in 1974 but left her influence and legacy in the holiness movement, and that “as a theologian she provided the link between John Wesley and the Pentecostals by modifying his theology of Christian perfection. White went on to say that “she simplified and popularized John

⁴⁹ Amos Yong, "Sanctification, science, and the spirit: salvaging holiness in the late modern world." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 47, no. 2 (September 1, 2012): 36-52, accessed March 9, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

Wesley's doctrine of entire sanctification, modifying it in six different ways. First, she followed John Fletcher in his identification of entire sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Second, she developed Adam Clarke's suggestion and linked holiness with power. Third, like Clarke, she stressed the instantaneous elements of sanctification to the exclusion of the gradual. Fourth, again following Clarke, she taught that entire sanctification is not really the goal of the Christian life, but rather its beginning. Fifth, through her "altar theology" she reduced the attainment of sanctification to a simple three-stage process of entire consecration, faith, and testimony. Sixth, she held that one needed no evidence other than the Biblical text to be assured of entire sanctification. Each of these changes was later incorporated into the pneumatology of the Pentecostal movement."⁵⁰

Kevin Lowery states that "whereas Wesley exhorts the believer to continually expect to reach perfection, Palmer asserts that one cannot even expect it until the decision is made to perform continuous unreserved consecration."⁵¹ Lowery went further to suggest that her model for consecration is that of a sacrifice being made on an altar. Romans 12:1-2 exhorts us to present ourselves as "living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God." However, Palmer, Lowery insists, believes that the act of consecration, in and of itself, will not make anyone holy. Holiness is achieved because "the altar sanctifies the gift." In

⁵⁰ Charles Edward White, "Phoebe Palmer and the development of Pentecostal pneumatology." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 23, no. 1-2 (March 1, 1988): 198-212, accessed March 11, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁵¹ Kevin T. Lowery, "A fork in the Wesleyan road: Phoebe Palmer and the appropriation of Christian perfection." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 36, no. 2 (September 1, 2001): 187-222, accessed March 13, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

essence, the gift is sanctified by virtue of the altar, i.e., there is something particular about the altar that renders it able to bestow holiness.”⁵²

Let me share my personal experience here. I experienced sanctification on the campgrounds of Apostolic Faith Church, Anthony Village, Lagos, many years ago by faith in the finished work of Christ. We were taught and had to tarry back then at the Altar for sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. By his grace, God did a definite work and I have had to continue to consciously separate myself from ungodliness. On the same Altar when I asked God to baptize me with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues, he did. I have consciously continued also to continue to pray in tongues. All the glory and honor be to our God. If he did it for me, he will do it for you or whosoever desires. It is at the Altar that things are altered. The Altar sanctifies the gift. It is a place of brokenness. It is a place where power exchanges hands, you bring your weaknesses and receive the dynamic power, the *Dunamis* of God for your situation, to triumph over every temptation, etc. The flesh is crucified at the Altar. It is a place of sacrifice. When we decide to say Yes, Lord and surrender absolutely to the will of God. We find that:-

1. Connection of Holy Spirit baptism with entire Sanctification (Baptism is quick)
2. Holiness is Power (over flesh)
3. Immediate Rather than Gradual Sanctification (things of God become paramount)

⁵² Kevin T. Lowery, "A fork in the Wesleyan road: Phoebe Palmer and the appropriation of Christian perfection." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 36, no. 2 (September 1, 2001): 187-222, accessed March 13, 2014, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost: 194.

4. Sanctification: Not the End Goal but the Beginning of Christian Life
(victorious life)
5. Altar Theology – It is at the Altar things are altered. (e.g. Abraham
surrendered Isaac at the Altar, Solomon gave his best sacrifice at the Altar)
6. Bible as Proof of Sanctification (not Emotionalism)

In conclusion, in order to receive the gift of sanctification, we are to come before God, repent of every sin that might hinder us and totally surrender our life, will, desires and lay it all at the altar as a living sacrifice, asking God to sanctify us. He is faithful and just and he will give us this gift so we can go and walk blameless before him and live a victorious Christian life here on earth, be able to do all that he has called and destined us to accomplish and eventually make heaven our home. Being sanctified helps us to walk in the ultimate culture which is the culture of heaven. Living a victorious Christian life by being in the world and not of the world can be transferred into our marriages, family life and all areas of life through walking in our sanctification with fear and trembling.

Figure 4 – Week Four Teaching Notes

Title: Culture in Marriage

Text: Genesis 2:24 Ephesians 5:31, Matthew 19:5, Malachi 2:15-16, I Peter 4:8

Marriage is an ordained institution by God as we see in Genesis. It is a covenant relationship that can only be broken by death. It is the union of a man and a woman in a relationship where they have pledged before a community of people and God to love and cherish each other and be solely committed to one another till the end of their lives.

Culture, which is the way of life and predominant beliefs of the society in which a couple lives can influence their marriage relationship for good or for bad. In a union you find two people coming from different cultures in some instances, or different religious backgrounds as the case may be. The Bible warns against being unequally yoked in a marriage relationship because this can spell the success or doom of the union. Each individual in the marriage hopefully would have learnt a thing or two about the other's culture and background before committing to a life-long relationship.

The mobility of our population results in instability for the members and in losses, financial and otherwise for the church but the greatest challenge facing the church is not fewer people attending church, but people attending less frequently. The weekend is a time for get-away, vacations, cruises, visit to the second home on the shore, Hawaii, Vermont or exotic resorts which people can get to any time of the year. This prevents couples from integration into the community or having the opportunity to have deep roots in the church community.

Assimilation, integration and the inability to secure a good job in a new culture affects marriages in the Nigerian community. A case in point is a couple that moved to America several years ago, both husband and wife were working, the wife is a nurse and the husband works other jobs. After some time the man did not find satisfaction in his job and decided to be going back and forth to Nigeria doing business selling used cars. The wife supported him morally and financially, to the point that they mortgaged their home and took out a line of credit so the husband can have enough money to do business. The husband went to Nigeria, married another woman and several years later decided to come back to America to divorce the wife. At this point the wife is struggling to care for her family as well as pay their mortgage and the line of credit. Husband is murdered.

There are cases of husbands assisting their wives in the Nigerian community to attend higher institutions of learning, advance to Master's degree and the women later decide the husbands are not educated enough for them and so they file for divorce. These issues emanate from breakdown of communication and lack of commitment to the marriage relationship. Couples who are walking in sanctification and conforming to the image of Christ will not be self-centered, they will not walk after the flesh but be Spirit led. Being rooted and grounded in the word of God, being a doer of the word and not just a hearer, not forsaking the fellowship of other believers, attending church regularly, participating in church programs and community work together as a couple helps fosters a healthy and successful marriage relationship. Communication, trust and commitment to one another is the backbone of any relationship. Stanley opines that data are quite consistent and clear that people who are more religious tend to have slightly more stable and happy marriages.

Stanley asserts that we live in a culture that thrives on messages dominated by individual needs and concerns. As part of this, people no longer see their vow to their mate as part of a commitment to the community, but as more of the nature of an agreement between two consenting parties.⁵³ The church emphasized two becoming one. It is no longer an individual effort but a collective team work that fosters unity, which has the power to trump break-downs in relationships caused by a focus on me vs. you.

Stanley believes that in all kinds of relationships, negative patterns of thinking and interaction are predictive of divorce risk, they are also a prime factor in putting children at increased risk for all kinds of negative outcomes in life.⁵⁴

What helps marriages in the long run is helping couples develop and maintain friendship, companionship, and vision, friendship, commitment, forgiveness, spiritual beliefs and practices, and expectation clarification. Some couples do not need help with skills. Some, even if they do, will respond more strongly to the information and suggestions about friendship or commitment. The ability to listen more and to communicate feelings or desires is helpful in any relationship.

Stanley therefore concludes that the element that impacted young married couples the most were messages related to commitment, investment in the relationship, and the preservation and protection of friendships.⁵⁵ Malachi 2:15-16. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith. "The word "guard" here is the Hebrew word shamar. Shamar is the word for hedge. This knowledge combined with the clear research findings

⁵³ Scott Stanley, 2003. "Strengthening marriages in a skeptical culture: issues and opportunities." *Journal Of Psychology & Theology* 31, no. 3: 224-230, accessed January 22, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 225.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 226.

yields a deeper nuance to this passage that essentially calls us to put a hedge of protection around our commitment in marriage.

Couples should be connected with others who are walking with God through the Holy Spirit on a daily basis, for the sake of encouragement and sustenance Schumm opines that happier spouses tend to attribute even better intentions than their partners may actually deserve while embittered spouses tend to attribute even worse intentions than their partners deserve. Positive affect tends to minimize negative affect (Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a latitude of sins. I Peter 4: 8).

Emotional and spiritual responsiveness to your spouse fosters friendship in marriage which does not give room for escalating sequences of negativity, also known as negative reciprocity. Romans 12: 17-21; Galatians 5: 15, 26; Philippians 4: 5. This negative reciprocity tends to lead to withdrawal and ultimately, bitterness (Schumm). (Colossians 3: 19; Hebrews 12: 15). Scripture seems to discuss this principle in terms of not being easily provoked (Proverbs 14: 29; I Corinthians 13: 5) nor prone to provoke others to anger (Ephesians 6: 4), as well as avoiding evil, false words, (Schumm). Wallace opines that marriage is actively good for you; it's not just an outmoded, useless, confining, abusive, bourgeois, patriarchal institution. He believes that no matter how you look, where you look, what you ask, or how carefully you control for confounding variables, married people are better off than people who are not married. Research has shown that sustained commitment and mutual support, and compassionate commitment sustains a healthy relationship and marriage (Wallace).

I could not agree more with Wallace that linking newly marrieds into mentoring relationships with couples whose marriages have endured helps married couples.

Existing statistics show that children of divorce have relatively higher rates of difficulty in getting married and in staying married themselves. He went further to say that through profiles of various adult children of divorce. Wallerstein et al. attribute this difficulty to the absence of role models and, to a lesser extent, the disruption in the child's life caused by the parents' grief.

In conclusion, believers have to walk in sanctification in order to live a victorious married life and to experience a healthy relationship that God desires for all their children. Both couples have to be involved in commitment, giving back and making sure that the relationship is Christ centered. Culture and society does affect our relationships and marriages, but we can make it a positive affect by conforming to the image of Christ and walking in holiness. Our lifestyle affects our children positively or negatively and our continued adherence to being rooted and grounded to the word of God will help our children avoid the end results of broken marriages and hardships of single parenthood. Knowing who we are in Christ as well as what belongs to us as our inheritance in Christ Jesus helps us to be more aware what our values are, to enable us have confidence when we pray and how to live.

Figure 5 – Week Five Teaching Notes

Title: Who we are in Christ and our Inheritance

Text: Jeremiah 1:4-10

We are precious before God. He made us in his image and likeness. We are going to look at various scriptural references that show and explain who we are in Christ and also what our inheritance is. This will help us to know how God feels about us and how we are to look at ourselves going forward. It also helps us to know how to pray and to be aware that God is ready to answer our prayers each time we call on him.

“The word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” “Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.” Jeremiah 1:4-10. (God’s declaration that we are his and special).

Psalms 139:13-18, says “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before

one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, How amazing are your thoughts concerning me God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you”.

Genesis 2:7-15, describes the 4 rivers in the Garden of Eden. Namely: Pishon (Fullness), Gihon (Overflow), Hiddekel (Purpose), Euphrates (Fruitful). God’s provision.

Genesis 1:28-30, God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” (And it was so. We are blessed).

Genesis 9:7,”As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.” (It is God’s command for us to be fruitful in every area of life).

2 Corinthians 5:17, 21, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: that person is a new creation. The old has gone, the new is here! Verse 21 says God made him who had no sin to be sin offering for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (The price has been paid, we are the righteousness of God).

Romans 12:2, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Believers need to renew their mind daily).

1 Peter 2:9,10 “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of

darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

John 1:12. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (You are a child of God/joint heir with Christ).

I Corinthians 6:19, “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;”

Ephesians 2:10, 18, For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. 18For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. (We are made in God’s image and likeness).

I Corinthians 12:27. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (We belong to the universal body of Christ, the church, of which Christ is the head).

John 15:5,15. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. Verse, 15 says I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (To grow, mature, conform to image of Christ, we have to abide in him).

1 John 4:4. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. (We are Christ-like).

Ephesians 2:8-9, For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast.

I Thessalonians 5:5. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. (Transformed from darkness to light).

Ephesians 2:6, And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. (The Devil is under our feet, we have dominion).

2 Corinthians 5:20. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

I Corinthians 6:17-20, But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. ¹⁹Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (Believers honor God when they live a sanctified life, body, soul and spirit).

I John 5:14-15,18. "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him. We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. (The price has been paid; purpose and walk in holiness).

I Peter 4:10, Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. (Serve others in love).

Colossians 3:12, "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."

John 15:16, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you." (Bearing fruit is maturing spiritually).

James 4:7, 7Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (We have a choice to make in submission to the will and purpose of God).

I Corinthians 2:16 for “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ. (Depression is not your portion, trust God).

Matt 5:14. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

I Peter 2:5, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house, into a temple of the Spirit to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (Seek God with all your heart and go after spiritual things).

Colossians 3:3. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God

Colossians 2:6-7. So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. (Be sanctified).

Galatians 2:20, I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Total surrender and consecration to God).

2 Corinthians 1:21-22. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

I Corinthians 1:2,3 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Roman 12:3 - For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. (Be humble).

Our Inheritance:

What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father (Galatians 4:1,2).(We need to mature in spirit to take what is ours). In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people (Ephesians 1:7,18). (God has a plan and purpose for you). And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). (It is the desire of the Father that our needs be met).

Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure. ⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance (Psalm 16:5-6). (Believe, receive and claim what belongs to you in Christ).

Because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. Praise God, Christ died and rose again and seated at the right hand of God (Hebrews 9:17). (His promises belong to us, we are the heirs of salvation).

1 Peter 1:3-5 ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This

inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (Receive Sozo: wholeness, deliverance, saved, being saved, provision and increase provided).

Proverbs 10:22. The blessing of the Lord brings wealth without painful toil. (Blessed!)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight (Ephesians 1:3-4).

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

(Hebrews 1:14). (Angels are sent by God to minister to Christians. You are not alone).

You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. ²⁴ But I said to you, "You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the Lord your God, who has set you apart from the nations (Leviticus 20:23-24). (We must live according to the customs of the Kingdom of God).

Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession (Psalm 2:8). (We have not because we ask not. Ask in faith, believing).

A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous (Proverbs 13:22). (It is God's desire that we prosper).

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.

It is the Lord Christ you are serving (Colossians 3:23-24).

so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7). (We are heirs of salvation and we have hope).

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory (Romans 8:1 and 17). (Believers are heirs of salvation and joint heirs with Christ).

In conclusion, it is beneficial for us to know who we are in Christ. It is important to go through the Bible passages so we know what the word of God says concerning us. He called us, he knew us before we were formed in our mother's womb and he has called us by his name. As believers the four rivers in Gen 2:7-15, should flow freely in our lives. The rivers represent how God has made provision for our wellbeing and also for us to go forth and touch lives for the better. The four rivers in the garden are: Pishon, which represents fullness of God's presence and blessings in our lives. Gihon, which represents overflow of the goodness of God. Hiddekel, which represents the purpose that we have and focus on achieving goals set before us. Euphrates, which represents fruitfulness in our lives. We are to be fruitful in all we do and our fruits should remain. We are to allow these rivers (attributes) in us to flow to our family members, neighbors, co-workers and everyone we come in contact with. Knowing who we are as a holy nation, peculiar people, set aside to do the will of God, coupled with the knowledge that we have godly inheritance and that we are not left helpless, will enable us to endure and trust God. Knowing who we are in Christ will help us live a more victorious Christian life and knowing what belongs to us as our inheritance in Christ will give us the boldness to bring our petitions to God in prayer and claim what we know is already ours instead of asking and begging. The truth that we know sets us free from bondage and lack. We are blessed.

Figure 6 – Week Six Teaching Notes

Title: **Testify, Mentor and Evangelize**

Testify:

Text: **1 Peter 3:15**

To testify is to proclaim what you have witnessed firsthand. It is to extend yourself and pour out of the abundance in your reservoir. To mentor is to help, to advise or train another, especially a younger or less experienced colleague. It always involves communication and it is relationship based. To evangelize is to share the good news of the gospel in this context. It is the practice of passing on information about a particular set of beliefs to another with the intension of conversion.

Tell of the wonders no matter how small that God has done in your life to encourage someone else. The woman at the well went to town and testified of her encounter with Christ. “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,” (1 Peter 3:15).

Through our testimonies we give glory to God for who he is, what he has done and we are saying to people that the grace of God is available to them no matter how bad or hopeless they think their circumstances are. Every trial, testing and tribulations we have been through in life makes us a better person and in fact makes us who we are today. God gave us the grace to go through so we can be a blessing to someone else that will find themselves in the same situation we were in. So whatever you find yourself experiencing right now that is not too encouraging or where you want to be, just know that the grace of

God on your life is sufficient to take you through the trial and you will come out on the other side with testimonies.

We are the best people to tell of what God has done in our lives, nobody can tell of what God has done in our lives better than us. Focus on the goodness of the Lord. Let's not dwell on Complain street or Murmur boulevard, but rather let us live on Faith street and Halleluyah avenue. I am reminded of the 10 lepers that were healed in the book of Luke 17:12-19. Only one came back to say thank you and he was made whole. When we testify, we are saying to God, we are thankful and he will do more.

We have to tell our own story. The greatest form of evangelism is to tell others of what God has done in your life. It is more authentic. People will believe your story, in fact they want to hear of what God has done in your life.

Mentoring:

Text: 2 Timothy 2:2

To mentor is to help, to advise or train another, especially a younger or less experienced colleague. It always involves communication and it is relationship based.

We are so busy investing our energy in everything and everyone else that we have no room for someone to invest in *us*. Do you have a mentor? Your mentor looks out for your soul. You might not see them often. You can call. You can email, you can write, or visit. Communication between a mentor and a mentee is a two way streak. You have to reach out and touch the life of someone else and make a difference. It requires an effort, commitment, time, resources and a heart for the good of another.

Mentors could be experienced practitioners, sharing their skills and insights with those who want to learn from them. They mentor through teaching and training, but also

through modeling what they know and through sharing their experience in practical ways. Mentors instruct and guide; sometimes they are like a cheerleader, while at other times they employ tough love to the extreme.

Mentors fill our bookstore shelves, magazine racks, and blogs. They present our TV shows, teaching us how to dress, cook, lose weight, start a new business, sell our home, or raise a family. These mentors instruct and guide; sometimes they are cheerleaders, while at other times they take tough love to the extreme. Their skills bring out the best in those they work with, equipping them to reach goals they couldn't have reached alone. When a leader like you has such great opportunity to influence others, aligning with a mentor is more than just a good idea—it's a crucial part of your leadership development. Are you a disciple? Can you commit your time and energy to disciple another believer? We have to give back. Don't be like the Dead Sea that has no outlet, always taking in but never giving back. It ends up clogged and smelly. Our lives will radiate Christ IJN.

Duplicate Christ in others; that which you have received entrust to capable men and women who can in turn pass it on to other capable hands. Laying your life down, your time and resources to see that someone else benefits from what you have received. We need to occupy our time with the things of the Kingdom. Go ye therefore and fulfill the Great Commission of bringing souls into the Kingdom of God. Young married couples need mentors. They need people who have gone through the road they are embarking on and are living a victorious life by the grace of God. Young Christians need mentors. A mentor must be Christ focused, not preaching self but pointing her protégé to the Savior and the word of God at all times. We need mentors in the body of Christ

today. Matured Christians need to mentor young believers. To affect the younger ones, they must see the fruit in our lives. We have to show the example, walk the walk as we talk the talk. The younger ones must be willing to glean from the older Christians (Elisha and Elijah), for mentoring to be effective. The older Christians have to make efforts to carry along the younger ones in spiritual gatherings (Paul and Timothy).

Evangelism:

Text: Mark 16:15

Every believer has been called to go out and spread the good news. Many times people believe this is a job for the pastors and ministers in the church. The Bible says he that wins a soul is wise. The following will help us evangelize:

- a. Utilize the power of synergy – send people out two by two.
- b. Employ the practice of specialization – focus on ethnicity, who are the group of people you want to reach?
- c. Proclaim the word of God – avoid preaching your denomination.
- d. Offer your services freely – freely you have received, freely give.
- e. Support those willing to work.
- f. Give out tracts or small Bibles.
- g. Give them the gospel, the good news. Do not condemn or be judgmental.
- h. Pray for boldness and ask God to give you souls Psalm 2:8, Ask of me and I will surely give the nations as your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as your possession.
- i. Relational evangelism works great. By being the epistle that is read of all men. Your

family, co-workers, neighbors and friends know who you are they see your character on display every day. Tell them about Christ and invite them to receive Christ in their hearts.

j. Prayer before you go out and after. If you have a large group, some can stay behind and pray for the team as you go out. Evangelism is going into the enemy's camp.

k. Celebrate and give thanks for one soul that comes to the Lord.

l. Sow the seed, someone else might water it and God will bring the increase.

m. Be selective – reach out to those that want to hear the Gospel Matt 10:11-15

n. Fear God, not man. Matt 10:26-27

o. Put the Lord first. Matt 10:34-36

p. Supporters share in the reward. Romans 10:14-15

In conclusion, tell of what the Lord has done in your life to encourage others and to give glory to God. Has he saved your soul? Has he sanctified you? Has he filled you with the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongue as the Spirit gives you utterance? Tell people the story. Has he healed you or done any miracle in your life? Has God been good to you? You need to tell the story. The world is full of negative reports and stories every day. We have an obligation to tell others of the goodness of God. Go out, live your life before all and testify to what has been passed unto you by your mentors and turn around and mentor someone else. That which you have received, pass on to a dependable person or people who will in turn pass it on to someone else. Take time to teach, encourage, help and mentor a young believer in his walk to maturity in Christ. Finally, we have an obligation to evangelize and tell others that God loves them and Christ came to die for them so that they can receive the gift of salvation, sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Analysis of the pre-test surveys

On the survey pre-test question: What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry? The majority wanted more of the word of God, some said love, some desired more of God, some benefit and some want good teachings. Some people wanted support through prayers, strength and fellowship.

On the pre-test question: Have you received the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues? Yes or No. If No, why not? Majority said yes, one had received before but lost it, wants to commit more. One said No, has not received.

On the pre-test question: Do you hunger more for the things of God or things of the world? 100% responded – things of God,

On the pre-test question: Are you resentful, keep malice and vengeful or forgiving when offended. One was resentful. Majority was forgiving when offended and two did not answer the question.

On the pre-test question: Do you have difficulty growing spiritually? Majority said No. One participant said yes and one did not answer the question.

On the pre-test question: Do you attend the Women's Meetings regularly? If No, why not? Four answered Yes. One answered No, she forget at times. One said No, because of school. Two said No, because they attend another outreach program.

On the pre-test question: What would make you to be more committed and involved with the group? Two said lack of time. One said when school is over. Another

said encouragement. Rearranging her schedule if possible. Love to pray. Getting a good job. Time and days of meeting. Choir.

On the pre-test question: Do you have a passion for souls/mentor young believers – Great commission. Responses were – Great passion, need to do more and majority said yes, they are passionate for souls/mentor of believers.

On the pre-test question: What expectations do you have of the Women's Ministry? Two desires growth, 2 wants more impact on men and women. Fellowship and Team spirit is desired. Oneness, unity. More women participation, teaching on holy living, blessed and fulfilled life. Be more godly; bringing more people to God. Exploits in the things of God. Carry everybody along, everyone involved and more follow up.

On the pre-test question: What is your life like? What takes up your time? Two said busy life. Some said school, family and house work. Some are not too busy. Involved in lots of programs. One said, nothing. One said lovely life and counseling.

On the pre-test question: What are your stressors? Answers were, health, inadequate sleep, 20% job and house work, 20% said balancing work and family. One said not enough time in the day. One said Deadlines and one said everything except church.

On the pre-test question: How do you struggle with cultural differences? Many have no problems, some have adapted, some learnt to adapt easily and some are trying to cope.

On the pre-test question: Is there someone in Church you would like to emulate? Many said yes there are lots of people they can emulate. One said all our leaders. Some said our pastor, our pastor's wife and my humble self. One said it is too personal.

On the pre-test question: Do you have any struggles in your marriage? Majority said no. One, not really. One is married to a Muslim and another said her husband walked out on her about six years ago.

On the pre-test question: Do you pray together with your spouse? Majority said yes and only one said not every day. Two said no.

Analysis of the post-test surveys

On the post-test question: What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry? One participant said to grow in sanctification, one said prayers; the recurring theme was love, friendliness and good relationship. Another was more dedication and one wanted to talk about practical things in the home.

On the question, have you received the gift of sanctification was added to measure growth and understanding of the phenomena. 100% said yes.

On the question have you received the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? 80% said yes. One said No, but did not know why and the second said No, and is not sure why.

On the question, do you hunger for the things of God or things of the world? 100% said yes, things of God.

On the question, are you resentful, keep malice and vengeful or forgiving when offended? 80% said forgiving, one said she is improving daily and one said resentful sometimes.

On the question, do you have difficulty growing spiritually? 80% replied they do not have difficulties growing spiritually. One said she needs more grace and the other thinks she still have difficulties growing spiritually.

On the question, do you attend the Women's meetings regularly? 50% said yes, the rest said no, because they have busy schedule, engaged in other program, no transportation.

On the question, what would make you to be more committed or involved with the group? 50% said they are already committed, 30% said scheduling of meetings and their job, 20% said prayers and availability of time.

On the question, do you have a passion for souls/mentor/great commission? 100% said yes.

On the question, what expectations do you have of the women's ministry? The answers were varied, majority want more connections, some women want to impact younger women and some need encouragement.

On the question of what is your life like and what takes up your time? 60% indicated work, 40% family, school, study of God's word and his presence.

On the question, what are your stressors? Work, family, too many activities, too little time was the answer.

On the question, do you pray together with your spouse? 90% said yes, 10% said sometimes.

On the question, do you struggle with cultural differences? 40% said no, they do not have struggles. 40% said sometimes, a bit, 20 said yes they do.

On the question, has culture affected your marriage in any way? 70% said no, 30% said yes, early in marriage and their children are neither here nor there culturally.

On the question, do you tell others about the goodness of God? 100% said yes.

In conclusion, therefore, one can deduce that there has been spiritual growth and a better understanding of the topic of sanctification. There is more yearning for the things of God. There is also a better understanding of the need for sanctification. There is a greater walk toward living a more victorious Christian life.

Charting the Survey

The Pre-test and Post-test survey questions were divided into themes in four categories. Spiritual has four questions, Fellowship has five questions, Culture in marriage has four and Community has three questions:

A. **Spiritual** comprises the following questions:

1. Have you received the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues?
2. Have you received the gift of sanctification?
3. Do you hunger for the things of God or things of the world
4. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?

B. **Fellowship** comprises the following questions:

1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?
2. Are you resentful, keep malice and vengeful or forgiving when offended
3. Do you attend the Women's Meetings regularly?
4. What would make you to be more committed and involved in the group?
5. What expectations do you have of the Women's Ministry?

C. **Culture in Marriage** comprises the following questions:

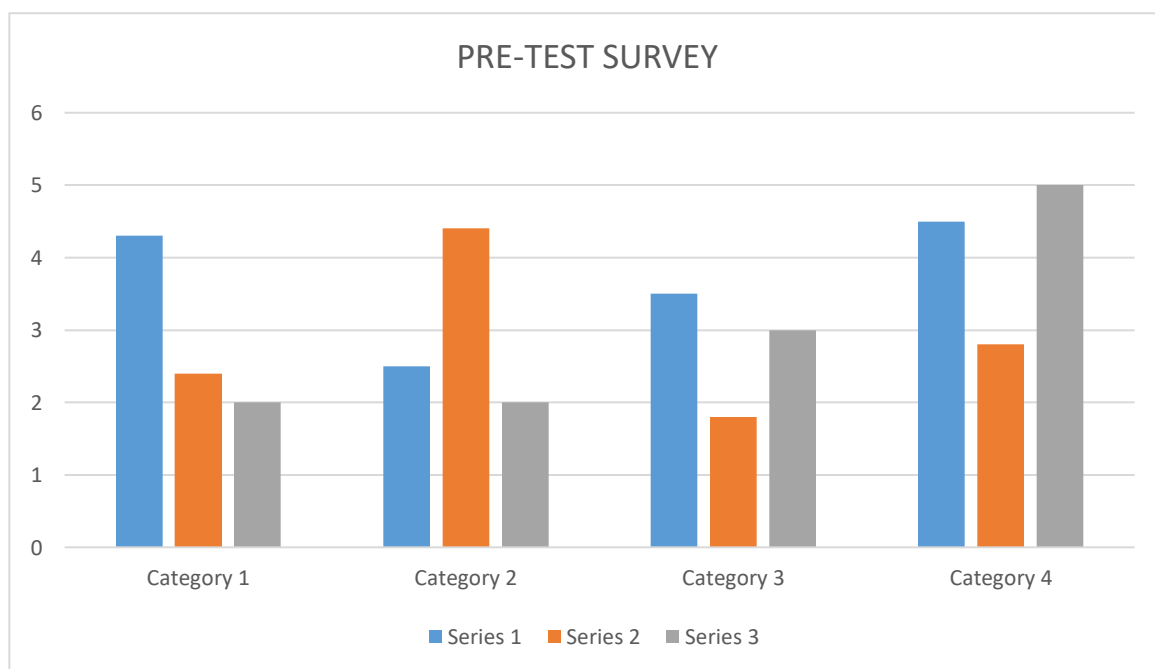
1. How do you struggle with cultural differences?
2. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?
3. What are your stressors?
4. Do you pray with your spouse

D. **Community** comprises the following questions:

1. What is your life like?

2. What takes up your time?
3. Is there someone in Church you would like to emulate?

Pre-test chart and analysis

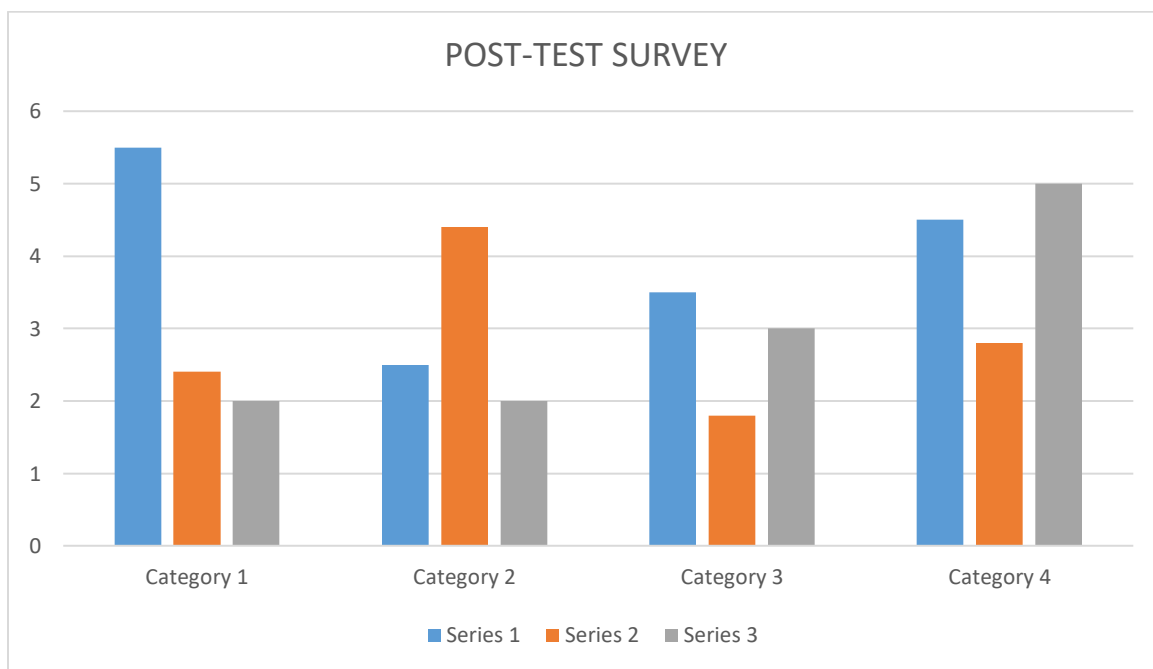


Category 1 - **Spiritual**
 Series 1 – 4.3 - Participants desire things of God
 Series 2 - 2.4 - Passionate for souls, mentoring
 Series 2 – 2.0 - Has not received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Category 2 - **Fellowship**
 Series 1- 2.6 - Need to schedule change at work to enable them attend meetings
 Series 2 – 4.4 - Desire growth, want more of good teachings and God’s word
 Series 3 – 2.0 - In need of support and unity among members

Category 3 - **Culture in Marriage**
 Series 1 – 3.5 - Balancing work and family
 Series 2 – 1.8 - Have adapted and some trying to adapt
 Series 3 – 3.0 - No struggles with culture. Pray with spouse, and not every day

Post-test chart and analysis



Category 1	-	Spiritual
Series 1 – 4.3	-	100% had received the gift of Sanctification. Desire and hunger for things of God
Series 2 – 2.4	-	100% have passion for souls and mentoring of young believers
Series 3 – 2.0	-	Needs more grace growing spiritually
Category 2	-	Fellowship
Series 1 – 2.6	-	Want to impact younger ones, want to connect and encouragement
Series 2 – 4.4	-	Growing in Sanctification, love, friendliness and good relationship
Series 3 – 2.0	-	Scheduling of meetings and their job
Category 3	-	Culture and Marriage
Series 1 – 3.5	-	Culture affected them and their children early in marriage but not any more. They pray with their spouse always, some sometimes.
Series 2 – 1.8	-	Too many activities, work are their stressors but learning to cope
Series 3 – 3.0	-	Assimilation into culture. Mix and mingle with other cultures
Category 4	-	Community
Series 1 – 4.5	-	100% tells others of the goodness of the Lord. Many are involved with community outreaches.
Series 2 – 2.8	-	Family and work take up their time. They look up to their leaders
Series 3 – 5.0	-	Study of God’s word and his presence is paramount

The following Table 1-8 is the analysis and transcript of the one-on-one interview the researcher had with each participant and their responses to the pre and post-test survey questions.

Table 1.1: Pre and Post Program Interviews with Bisi

Questions	Pre-test	Post-test	Observation
1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?	Fellowship, pour into the women and see them grow	Be a mentor to the women. Like to see women show willingness to be mentored	Awareness of need for mentoring. Growth and change
2. Have you received the gift of sanctification?	Yes	Yes	Consistency
3. Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues?	Yes	Yes	Consistent
4. Do you hunger more for things of God or things of the world?	Yes	Yes, more	Growth
5. Are you resentful and keep malice or forgiving when offended?	Not resentful	More forgiving	Growth
6. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?	No	No	Consistent
7. Do you attend the WM regularly?	Yes	Yes	Committed
8. What would make you be more committed?	Committed	Very Committed	Committed
9. Do you have passion for souls/mentor young believers?	Yes	Yes	Consistent

10. What expectations do you have of the WM?	Grow spiritually daily	Do programs that make women grow spiritually	Improvement
11. What is your life like?	Giving of self Ministry and circular work	Giving of self whenever Needed	
12. What takes your time?	Work	Ministry and work	
13. What are your stressors?	Work	Work	No change
14. How do you struggle with cultural difference	No problem, already formed. Take good and leave the bad.	Same answer as pre-test	No change
15. Is there someone in church you will like to emulate?	No response	No response	No change
16. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?	I am blessed	Same answer as pre-test	No change
17. Do you pray together with your spouse?	Yes I do	Yes I do	Consistency

Table 1.2: Pre and Post Program Interviews with Amaechi

Questions	Pre-test	Post-test	Observation
1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?	Good news	Behavior and character formation. Truthfulness	Improvement
2. Have you received the gift of sanctification?	No	Yes	Growth
3. Have you received the	Yes	Yes	No change

baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues?			
4. Do you hunger more for things of God or things of the world?	Yes	Yes	No change
5. Are you resentful and keep malice or forgiving when offended?	Not resentful	Forgiving	Improvement
6. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?	No	No	Desires fellowship with other women
7. Do you attend the WM regularly?	Yes	Yes, I am trying	Improvement
8. What would make you be more committed?	Sharing my gift of singing	Sharing my gift	Desire to do more
9. Do you have passion for souls/mentor young believers?	Yes	Yes, more	Growth
10. What expectations do you have of the WM?	Work for God and do good deeds	Sincere love for one another	Showing more interest
11. What is your life like	Busy with children	Busy with family	No change
12. What takes your time?	Work	Work	No change
13. What are your stressors?	Job and children	Job and children	No change
14. How do you struggle with cultural difference	I have no struggles. I respect my elders	I do the necessary good things and leave the bad.	Friendly personality
15. Is there someone in church you will like to emulate?	I try to do the best that I can	I try to do my best	Eager to learn and look up to the elders
16. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?	Sometimes. It is not easy	Sometimes. It is not easy.	No change

17. Do you pray together with your spouse?	Yes. Every morning.	Yes. Every morning.	Consistent

Table 1.3: Pre and Post Program Interviews with Cecilia

Questions	Pre-test	Post-test	Observation
1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?	Knowledge and support for spiritual growth	Family support in the home. I have learned a lot from the teaching and picked lots of information that is helpful	Exponential Growth
2. Have you received the gift of sanctification?	No	Yes. I now have a better understanding	Growth
3. Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues?	No	No	Desires to receive the gift and I have ministered to her
4. Do you hunger more for things of God or things of the world?	No. I hunger for things of the world	Yes, I hunger for the things of God	Growth
5. Are you resentful and keep malice or forgiving when offended?	Yes, I was resentful.	No, I am now forgiving	Growth
6. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?	Yes	No, not any more	Growth
7. Do you attend the WM regularly?	No	Yes	Improvement in attendance
8. What would make you be more committed?	The program	After this program there is more interest in participating in the WM	Growth

9. Do you have passion for souls/mentor young believers?	Yes	Yes	Consistency
10. What expectations do you have of the WM?	For more women to get involved	Older ones to mentor the younger. Do more activities	Growth
11. What is your life like	Busy	Available for the work of God	Shows improvement
12. What takes your time?	Family	Church work	Growth
13. What are your stressors?	Job	Finances	Started a new business needs clients
14. How do you struggle with cultural difference	Family and raising children. Women liberation. The food was a challenge at first	Marriages break up because of culture. Power given to women here. Modernization in churches	Interest is aroused and trying to adjust to the new culture
15. Is there someone in church you will like to emulate?	So many	I want to grow spiritually	Increased interest in spiritual things
16. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?	No	No	No change
17. Do you pray together with your spouse?	Sometimes	Depends on our schedules	

Table 1.4: Pre and Post Program Interviews with Shade

Questions	Pre-test	Post-test	Observation
1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?	Spiritual and physical support. To be able to open up and confide in other women.	Encouragement, teach each other financial survival tips. To do more	Wants to be more involved
2. Have you received the gift of sanctification?	No	Yes	Growth

3. Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues?	No	Yes	Growth
4. Do you hunger more for things of God or things of the world?	No	Yes	Growth
5. Are you resentful and keep malice or forgiving when offended?	No	Yes, forgiving	Friendly personality
6. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?	Yes	No, not anymore	Growth
7. Do you attend the WM regularly?	Yes	Yes, more	Growth
8. What would make you be more committed?	More responsibility	Want to be more involved	Increased participation
9. Do you have passion for souls/mentor young believers?	Yes but shy	Yes, trying more	Shows interest
10. What expectations do you have of the WM?	Involve more young people	am happy with the group	Increased participation
11. What is your life like	Good	Great, compared to the past	Improvement
12. What takes your time?	Family, children and work	Family, children and work	No change
13. What are your stressors?	If things don't go according to plan	Deadlines	
14. How do you struggle with cultural difference	I had my struggles in high school. I was bullied and suicidal then.	I became boss over those that bullied me, so I take that as a pay back. I cope better now with cultural difference, I can learn from others.	Great improvement
15. Is there someone in church	I do not know people well	I desire to learn	Eager to learn

you will like to emulate?	enough. None of us is perfect.		
16. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?	Religious differences because my husband is a Muslim.	We try to teach our children to be God fearing	
17. Do you pray together with your spouse?	No we don't	I pray on my way to work and in Church	

Table 1.5: Pre and Post Program Interviews with Caroline

Questions	Pre-test	Post-test	Observation
1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?	Prayer	Focus on God	Hunger for more of God
2. Have you received the gift of sanctification?	Yes	Yes	No change
3. Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues?	Yes	Yes	No change
4. Do you hunger more for things of God or things of the world?	Yes, more for the things of God	I am not left behind	Satisfied with where she is at
5. Are you resentful and keep malice or forgiving when offended?	No	Forgiving. I still call my husband, text him. I believe God.	Hopeful that her husband will return
6. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?	No	No	No change
7. Do you attend the WM regularly?	No because of work	Yes, trying	Improvement
8. What would make you be more committed?	Grace of God	Grace of God	Wants to attend more
9. Do you have passion for	Yes	Yes	No change

souls/mentor young believers?			
10. What expectations do you have of the WM?	A lot. Appreciating the gift in other people.	Great expectations	Wants more from the group
11. What is your life like	A testimony. God has been very good to me	God has been good to me	Appreciative
12. What takes your time?	Family and people	Busy	Busy lifestyle
13. What are your stressors?	Children	Children	No change
14. How do you struggle with cultural difference	No problem, try to leave the bad influences	Focus on the good in the culture	Integrated into the society
15. Is there someone in church you will like to emulate?	My Pastor	My Pastor	No change
16. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?	Yes, My husband walked out six years ago.	I believe God	Faith
17. Do you pray together with your spouse?	No	No	No change

Table 1.6: Pre and Post Program Interviews with Florence

Questions	Pre-test	Post-test	Observation
1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?	More activities outside of the church and timing of meeting	Learn more about cooking different dishes quickly. Mentor all our young mothers	More impact on the women, both physical and spiritual
2. Have you received the gift of sanctification?	No	Yes	Positive Change. Growth
3. Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues?	Yes	Yes	No Change

4. Do you hunger more for things of God or things of the world?	Yes	Yes. More for the things of God.	Growth
5. Are you resentful and keep malice or forgiving when offended?	No	No. I am forgiving	No change
6. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?	No	No. Better	More hunger for growth
7. Do you attend the WM regularly?	No. Because of other programs conflicting with the time	Yes. Better attendance	Growth
8. What would make you be more committed?	When my school is over, which is soon	Timing, I will make myself available	Shows interest in being more involved
9. Do you have passion for souls/mentor young believers?	Yes	Yes	No change
10. What expectations do you have of the WM?	You have done a great job with the Women's ministry. To be more vibrant.	Check out other women's groups to see what they are doing, so we can improve too.	To do more
11. What is your life like	Busy. Work and business.	Being a grandmother, student, and wife.	No change
12. What takes your time?	My work and school	My Work and school	Graduating this May
13. What are your stressors?	School work and my job because they are time sensitive	School work and my job because I have to attend to patients timely	Will have more time for the Women's meetings after graduation
14. How do you struggle with cultural difference	Initially it was shock. Children and parent relation. The parents are not there in this culture. Manager is the one cleaning but in Africa the juniors clean	Parents send children away at 18, in African culture you can stay for as long as you want. Dressing culture is different. Nakedness. A man leaves his children and goes to take over responsibility for	She cannot understand why a man will leave his own children and go and live with another women who has her own children from another man and then he

		another person's children.	takes responsibility for the children that does not belong to him
15. Is there someone in church you will like to emulate?	My Pastor in the knowledge of the Word of God	My pastor because of his knowledge of the word among other things	No change
16. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?	Not really, whatever is happening is normal in marriages	Not really.	Has been married for over 30 years
17. Do you pray together with your spouse?	Yes, except when he is not around. That is a privilege to pray together as family.	Yes	Consistent

Table 1.7: Pre and Post Program Interviews with Mosun

Questions	Pre-test	Post-test	Observation
1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?	Feel comfortable to share experiences	Spiritual growth	Growth
2. Have you received the gift of sanctification?	Yes	Yes. We learned a lot which gave me better understanding	Growth
3. Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues?	Yes	Yes	No change
4. Do you hunger more for things of God or things of the world?	Yes	Yes. Always	No change
5. Are you resentful and keep malice or forgiving when offended?	No, Forgiving.	No, forgiving.	No change
6. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?	No	No	No change

7. Do you attend the WM regularly?	Yes	Yes	Committed. Attends meetings
8. What would make you be more committed?	Committed	Very committed	Very committed to the ministry
9. Do you have passion for souls/mentor young believers?	Yes	Yes	Consistent
10. What expectations do you have of the WM?	For the women to rise up and do more	Do more in the kingdom of God.	More involvement
11. What is your life like	Busy woman. Family environment	Complete in Jesus	Busy but has time for things of God
12. What takes your time?	Work	Work	No change
13. What are your stressors?	If things are not going the way they're supposed to.	Finishing a project on time	Time conscious
14. How do you struggle with cultural difference	Did not really affect me much when I came here at the age of 21	I came here young and been here for so long. Have no struggle.	Has adapted beautifully
15. Is there someone in church you will like to emulate?	My pastor's wife, as a friend.	She is gentle	No change
16. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?	Everybody does. Don't allow anything to stress me out, whatever comes, we resolve it.	We resolve whatever differences we might have and move on.	Resolved
17. Do you pray together with your spouse?	Yes, in the morning	Yes, in the morning	Consistent

Table 1.8: Pre and Post Program Interviews with Patience

Questions	Pre-test	Post-test	Observation
1. What would you like to get from the Women's Ministry?	The women are not genuine. Even some of the ministers in the church are fake. Not friendly.	This program has helped restore my faith. I will look for ways to be involved.	Improvement and growth
2. Have you received the gift of sanctification?	No	Yes	Growth
3. Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues?	No	More enlightened but not yet received.	Growth
4. Do you hunger more for things of God or things of the world?	Yes	Yes	No change
5. Are you resentful and keep malice or forgiving when offended?	No, Forgiving.	No, forgiving.	No change
6. Do you have difficulty growing spiritually?	No	No	No change
7. Do you attend the WM regularly?	No, because I am busy.	Yes, sometimes. I am trying	Improvement
8. What would make you be more committed?	Depends on scheduling	Trying to be more committed.	Showing greater effort
9. Do you have passion for souls/mentor young believers?	No	Yes	Growth
10. What expectations do you have of the WM?	Be genuine. Unity	Love one another. Friendliness	Fruit of sanctification to be exhibited
11. What is your life like	Very busy	Making room for the things of God	Growth
12. What takes your time?	Work	Family time	Change

13. What are your stressors?	Kids	Kids	No change
14. How do you struggle with cultural difference	No problems	No struggles	Adapted very well into the culture
15. Is there someone in church you will like to emulate?	Bisi Alao, she helped me with my babies when we first joined the church. Nikky Adossi very nice and genuinely friendly	Bisi Alao, she helped me with my babies when we first joined the church. Nikky Adossi was very nice and friendly, the first time we were introduced.	Friendly sister that just wants to be loved and appreciated
16. Do you have any struggles in your marriage?	No, my husband adores the ground I walk on	No, my husband adores the ground I walk on	No change
17. Do you pray together with your spouse?	Yes, but we can do more	Yes, we are doing more	Growth

Implementation of the program was carried out through Figure 1-6, Charting of the Survey and finally with Tables 1-8 on the one-on-one interview with the participants.

The summary of learning reveals where most of the participants were in respect of their spiritual state of mind before the implementation of the program. They were busy women with busy lifestyles with little or no time for the things of God but at the end of the program there was a paradigm shift towards spiritual growth and a desire to pursue spiritual things. It was evident that majority wanted genuine love, fellowship and friendship. Where there was distrust, we now find a renewed interest in getting involved with the group and seeking after God. There is a better understanding of what Sanctification is and how it affects their walk with Christ as well as their marriages. Many want to live a victorious Christian life. Some had experienced challenges with the culture when they first moved here but majority have adapted and integrated into the

culture in the United States. It was evident that no culture is perfect, the African culture has its good, bad and ugly side and so does the American culture. All other cultures all over the world have their share of good, bad and ugly. The culture that all Christians should be looking to emulate is the heavenly culture; the only superior culture is the culture of the Kingdom of God, which is without spot or wrinkle, which will lead us to live that victorious Christian life here on this side of heaven. It is the only superior culture to all other culture that we can think of, it is holy, fair, based on unconditional love and I could go on and on. I was touched by the desire and yearning of the women to be loved and accepted, to make friends, have fellowship with other women and to have that sense of belonging. I also found that despite their busy life, many were hungry and thirsty for the word of God and the things of God. At the end, I feel a closeness to each of the women having heard their stories and how they desire to move forward in their journey of conforming to the image of Christ. I see myself in them. This program has impacted my life positively and spurred my hunger and passion to do more and help the body of Christ grow spiritually.

The researcher would suggest improvements for future projects to include the male population of the church. Make the six weeks teachings to be more like a Bible study where participants can ask questions right after each teaching session. The project can be done as a three day conference or a weekend retreat program. Make practical the teachings on how to receive sanctification by inviting participants to come to the Altar and lay their lives down as a sacrifice and ask for the gift of sanctification. In the Evangelism segment, for participants to go out on a particular day, Saturday or Sunday and hand out tracts, Bibles and witness in the neighborhood. Future projects should also

encourage participants to look around the church and prayerfully pick a mentor who they will be accountable to. Also in a future project, a quantitative research methodology can be employed to allow the entire church congregation benefit from the program.

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Loughborough University Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3TU United
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Dayton, Ohio**

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Doctor of Ministry Final Project**

**LEADING WOMEN TOWARD SANCTIFICATION
CONFORMING TO THE IMAGE OF CHRIST**

by

Rosalynn N. Adossi
United Theological Seminary, 2015

Mentors

Lori Reiber, D. Min.
Stephen Swisher, D. Min.

Date: _____

Approved:

Faculty Mentors

Associate Dean of Doctoral Studies